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THE

WORKS,

THEOLOGICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS,

Including some pieces not before printed,

OF

FRANCIS BLACKBURNE, M.A.

LATE RECTOR OF RICHMOND,

AND ARCHDEACON OF CLEVELAND;

With some account

OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF THE AUTHOR, BY HIMSELF,

COMPLETED BY HIS SON

FRANCIS BLACKBURNE, L.L.B.

And illustrated by an Appendix of Original Papers.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

LIBERABIT VERITAS.

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THE

CONFESSIONAL:

OR,

A FULL AND FREE INQUIRY

INTO THE

RIGHT, UTILITY, EDIFICATION, and SUCCESS,

Of Eſtabliſhing

SYSTEMATICAL CONFESSIONS OF FAITH AND DOCTRINE IN PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

Quàm vos facillumé agitis, quâm eſtis maxumè
Potentes, dites, fortunati, nobiles;
Tam maxumè vos æquo animo æqua noſcere
Oportet, ſi vos voltis perhiberi probos. TERENT.

FIRST PUBLISHED, M DCC LXVI.

Re-printed from a copy of the Third Edition of M DCC LXX,
Corrected by the AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE controversy occasioned by THE CONFESSIONAL hath been carried on with a spirit so searching, and attended with an event so little to the disadvantage of the work itself, that no room is left for any considerable additions to this third publication of it. Some, however, the reader will find, suggested chiefly by occasions given since the appearance of the second edition, and those of importance only to such as are apt to take it for granted that the defenders of public institutions must needs be in the right in every thing.

For the rest, the patrons and partizans of church-subscriptions, well know to whom they are indebted for the late elaborate investigations of those ancient and modern muniments of church authority, which give the practice its greatest strength and plausibility. Nor, on the other hand, are the friends of religious liberty insensible of their obligations to

those, who have shewn how little those *precarious charters* are able to maintain their respective claims, when confronted by the original record of the rights and privileges of christian men.

Among the worthies of the latter class, stands foremost ONE,* whose superiority in this disputation will be acknowledged and admired in distant times (the *cordatior ætas,*) when his opponents are remembered chiefly by their titles, or the titles of those by whom they were summoned and animated to the contest.

There are likewise other sensible and spirited writers who have done honour to THE CONFESSIONAL by espousing its honest cause, as the cause of the protestant religion in general, and of the protestant church of *England* in particular: and if among the more recent advocates for christian liberty should be found some learned and respectable writers of the dissenting persuasions, who can wonder? Is there a reader of common penetration who does not perceive, that if the ideas of Messieurs *Rutherforth*, *Ibbetson*, *Balguy*, the *Essayist on establishments*, and the *writers* of three or four bulky packets of anonymous *letters*, were

* Dr. BENJAMIN DAWSON, Rector of BURGH in *Suffolk*.

to be realized by statute and canon law, there must be an end of all *toleration*, and a speedy revival of excommunications, deprivations, fines, imprisonments; and, at last, of new processions to *Smithfield:* "For," as a celebrated writer hath observed, "Popery is but "the consummation of that tyranny, which "every religious system in the hands of men "is in pursuit of, and whose principles they "are all ready to adopt, whenever they are "fortunate enough to meet with its success."*

The same ingenious and learned writer hath said, that "if it were possible for mankind to "receive a perfect religion" (which it seems, he thinks, it is not,) "national establishments "would be necessary for its support, and yet "infallibly productive of its destruction." Whether the learned *inquirer* intended by this theory to accommodate our rigid conformists with an argument for a perfect acquiescence in our present system, I will not say. But I almost think, that some of our modern pleaders for church authority have not been averse to avail themselves of this state of the case, in the methods they have taken to silence all de-

* *A Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.* ed. 1757, p. 184.

mands of reviews and corrections of our present forms.

The process, methinks, lies thus. *Decency*, and, in my humble opinion, *truth*, obliges them to hold, that christianity is a *perfect religion*. Their own interest requires them to say, it cannot be supported but by a national establishment, at the same time that common sense, and notorious fact, wring from them a confession that all human establishments are imperfect. Whatsoever is so connected with imperfection, has certainly a tendency to decay, and in the end to destruction. Happily however for the *cause*, religion may be evaporated with little or no damage to the establishment. In popish countries christianity hath disappeared, but the establishment still remains; and why may not that be the case hereafter *elsewhere ?* When true religion is gone, the human establishment may remain, as a succedaneum, and do the political business at least, of true religion, as well or better than true religion itself.

" There may be good and important rea-
" sons," said the late Archbishop *Secker*,
" to submit, even without remonstrating, to
" what we do not approve." And again,

" Doctrines *not necessary*, may be *useful*." In these cases, true religion, or christianity, is out of the question. Christianity requires me not to submit to, but to remonstrate against, impositions which I do not approve. And doctrines *not necessary*, are not *christian* doctrines. Hence it appears that the *good* and *important reasons*, and the *usefulness* here spoken of, relate entirely to the preservation of the *establishment*, and not at all to that of *christianity*.

Dr. *Balguy* is still more full to the purpose. He speaks of the folly of " going to the scrip-
" tures for what is not to be found in them;" meaning, the foundation of church-authority, or, in other words, of national establishments. The consequence is, that those national establishments will bid the fairest for *permanency*, which have their greatest supports from human power, and the least countenance from the scriptures.—But then these are the establishments against which the cries of the christian reformer are the loudest. *Ergo*—the christian reformer is—a wronghead—the whitewasher of a Negro.

These gentlemen, indeed, do not chuse to own the above-mentioned consequence, though

it immediately follows from their premises; because our forefathers, from whom we derive our present *reformed* system, are generally supposed to have built it upon a different foundation. But the mischief is, that while they are labouring to establish their *consistency*, they bring their *sincerity* into question. A circumstance brought to light by a late publication* will explain this.

The doctrine of Archbishop *Secker* above cited, is delivered in a letter, which discovers to what extremity that eminent prelate was embarrassed by the fine reflections of the late Dr. *Lardner* upon the proceedings of the council of *Nice*,† so long ago as the year 1750. His Grace's pretensions to *candour* and *moderation* in matters of religion, which he professed even to a degree of affectation, could hardly prevent his chagrin from breaking out on this trying occasion. Dr. *Lardner's* principles in that incomparable digression are irrefragable, and the application of them to the present times next to inevitable; and if an expedient

* Memoirs of the life and writings of the Reverend NATHANAEL LARDNER, D. D.

† Credibility of the Gospel History. *Part* ii. Vol. VIII. p. 19—32.

could not be found to mitigate the sentence passed with so much justice on the council of *Nice*, it would unavoidably fall on some councils and convocations of more modern date, for whose honour and reputation his Grace was more immediately concerned. The management was masterly. The sagacious prelate grants Dr. *Lardner's* premises in *general words*, with much seeming frankness, but warily guards, as he goes along, against his conclusions, by certain *limitations* so expressed, that they might, upon any future emergency, take away all meaning from his concessions. For particulars, I beg leave to refer the reader to the letter itself,* and shall only observe, that when the cause of THE CONFESSIONAL (which was precisely the cause pleaded by Dr. *Lardner*) came into judgment fifteen years after, the great benefit of his Grace's *cautionary restrictions* was immediately acknowledged; the jury appointed to try the culprit by his Grace's canons, finding him guilty of offending against every one of them, without going out of court.

Dr. *Lardner* indeed was a dissenter, and was prejudiced against subscriptions for reasons and

* Memoirs, p. 98.

considerations, which, as the orthodox will have it, lay quite out of the road of the author of *The Confessional*. To this one might answer, that reasons and considerations drawn from the christian scriptures, should not seem to lie out of the road of *any* protestant. But be it so. May they not be supposed to lie full as far out of the road of cardinal *Bellarmin* ? Grant me this, reader, and then try whether you cannot find an apology for the author of *The Confessional* in the following detail, even though he should be found with a mitre upon his head.

About an hundred years ago, the divines of *France* were greatly divided, and grievously embroiled in the controversy occasioned by the doctrines of *Jansenius*. The Archbishop of *Paris*, in concurrence with the Jesuits, procured the condemnation of those doctrines, as being heretical ; and prevailed so far as to have that condemnation acknowledged as catholic and just, by a general subscription, extending to some lay professions, and even to the nuns of certain monasteries.

One of the best pens of *Port Royal* (and they had few bad ones among them) was employed, under the name of *Damvilliers*, to ex-

pose this novel and absurd practice. The proposition to be subscribed did not specify any particular dogma ; but imported merely, that the words, " *the sense of* Jansenius *is catholic*," was an heretical proposition. The Jansenist writer, having noted this Jesuitism, goes on thus in his own language, which I forbear to translate, as the passage contains an *opprobrium*, that a protestant advocate for subscriptions should blush to deserve.

" Il faut avoüer, que depuis que les hommes
" raisonnent il n'y eut de pareille extrava-
" gance. Mais le succès en est encore plus
" ètrange. Car quoique la pluspart du mon-
" de s'en mocque en particulier, on agit pour-
" tant en public comme si on estoit persuadè,
" et les Jesuites ont le credit, pour ètablir
" cette absurditè inoüie, d'introduire UNE
" PRATIQUE DE SOUSCRIPTION, dont on ne
" trouve aucun exemple dans l'Eglise catholi-
" que, mais seulement parmy des Heretiques,
" qui en sont blâmez par ceux qui ont defen-
" du l'Eglise contre eux. Car il est bon que
" l'on scache que depuis que l'Eglise est
" l'Eglise, on n'a jamais fait signer ny des
" Religieuses, ny des Maistres d'Ecole, ny des
" Clercs, ny mème des simples Prestres. Ce
" furent les Lutheriens d'Allemagne de la

" Confession d'Ausbourg qui s'aviserent, pour
" une fois seulement, de faire signer leur Con-
" fession de foy par les Principaux de College,
" et les Maistres d'Ecole. Et ils en sont re-
" pris par le Cardinal Bellarmin comme d'une
" vanitè insupportable, et d'une nouveautè
" inoüie dans l'Eglise de Dieu, depuis les
" Apostres. Or qu'une chose aussy ètrange
" que *cette pratique, à laquelle on n' a jamais*
" *eu recours dans les plus damnables heresies,*
" ait estè introduite en France, c'est à dire,
" dans l'Eglise du monde la plus libre, et la
" plus enemie de ces servitudes, sur la plus
" grande des toutes les bagatelles, cela est ad-
" mirable; mais en la maniere qu'on admire
" les effets extraordinaries de la bizarrèrie des
" hommes. Il est vray que les Jesuites ne
" pouvoient mieux faire voir l'exces du credit
" qu'ils ont dans l'Eglise, que par ce moien.
" Ce n'est rien d'ètablir des choses raisonna-
" bles; on ne scait si c'est la raison ou la
" force qui les a fait recevoir. Mais pour
" bien faire paroistre son pouvoir, il faut
" choisir des choses comme celle-là qui soient
" excessivement dèraisonnables." *Les Ima-*
ginaires. à Liege, 1667. p. 99.—Happily the *Parisian* prelates' injunction went *one* degree beyond the protestants in this extravagance.*

* It ſhould ſeem, by a paſſage in the old book, called *Part of a*

We have no *Nuns* among us, nor any thing like them, unless you chuse to call the *Religious* of the *Magdalen* by that name: and nobody, I imagine, thinks of taking subscriptions from them.† It is just enough, that our *Pratique*, at one of the universities, takes in boys at their admission into colleges; and at both, graduates of all ages and professions, poor curates in all circumstances, and even country schoolmasters. It is, however, with us, just as it was with the *French* in these days of *Jansenism*. Few sensible men talk of these things

Regiſter, &c. p. 82. that about the year 1573, women as well as men were required to ſubſcribe the thirty-nine articles. The place alluded to is in *Maiſter Edwarde Dering's anſwer unto four articles.*

Exceptions againſt the firſt article. "There is in that book, one "article of the conſecration of biſhops, and archbiſhops. To what "purpoſe is this article put in? or, what reaſon is there to make "all, both men and women, ſubſcribe unto it?"

† I would not however be underſtood to anſwer *in futuro*, for every individual concerned in that laudable inſtitution. A reſpectable friend, a great dealer in curioſities, ſhewed me the other day, a book publiſhed by one of them, intituled, *Comfort for the Afflicted*, decorated with an elegant frontiſpiece, wherein is ſeen the ſpiritual director ſtanding before a *weeping Magdalen* in the habit of his order, and pointing to a *Crucifix* placed behind her. Such a repreſentation, in a book of proteſtant piety, ſeems to be no inconſiderable ſtep towards the *conſummation* mentioned by the ingenious writer above cited. And thus, by gradually carrying one point after another, the introduction of *ſubſcription* into the *ſociety* may at length be but a mere *bagatelle*.

in private parties, but with high disapprobation; and yet the practice is continued, for no end that can be discovered, but that the power of the church may appear with the greater *brilliance*, the more *unreasonable* the things are that she enjoins. For, I suppose, no sincere protestant will say with Dr. *Powel*, that the novices in theological literature may *reasonably* subscribe a systematical confession *upon the authority of others.*

It has been said, that the author of *The Confessional* is an enemy to all establishments; and some people, it seems, think it incumbent upon him to be explicit upon this head. He does not think so himself; but as the explanation required may be brought within a small compass, he will give it.

He thinks, in the first place, that the christian religion is perfectly adapted, in all its parts, to the state and condition of man; and is, so far, a *perfect* religion: but being in itself a religion of the greatest simplicity and liberality, its excellency must be debased, in proportion as it is incorporated with superstitious modes of worship, and restrictive forms of doctrine. In the first instances, he thinks the christian religion hath been *corrupted*, in

the other *cramped*, by human establishments; and the longer it remains in such unnatural connections, the more probable will be its tendency to destruction.

He is not of opinion that the christian religion, "by being kept intirely separate from "worldly interests," or, in other words, professed by individuals without respect to temporal emoluments, "would be neglected, or pe- "rish in oblivion," because he is persuaded it is enjoined to be so kept, and so professed, by the gracious author of it. Hence it follows, that human establishments are not *necessary* to it's support. A certain writer hath said, that "if men were not to speak their minds in "spite of establishments, *truth* would soon be "banished from the earth." And the very same may be said of *piety* and *righteousness*. So little is the christian religion indebted to human establishments for its *support*.

Where is the most bigoted formalist who will venture to say he is a *friend* to those national establishments, which are "*infallibly* produc- "tive of destruction to the christian reli- "gion?"* Why then shall the author of *The*

* *See*, The Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil, p. 192.

Confessional be restrained from saying, he is an *enemy* to *such* establishments? If the question were to be, whether the christian religion or the national establishment should be dedesroyed? he hopes and believes he should have the honour of voting with the whole hierarchy of the church of *England.* But he is not for having things come to any such extremity. Whatever he may think of particular establishments, he thinks there are none of them so bad, but that it may be *reformed* by being brought back to the terms of the original record (to which all christian establishments appeal) with respect to those points in which it has deviated from it; namely, by discharging all superfluous traditions, and systematical doctrines, with which the christian religion hath been incumbered by the craft or the vanity of men presuming to be wise above what is written.

Two things have been said to this: 1. That this is not to be expected of the present generation: and I find some men have been called *visionaries,* even for talking of it.—But why so? It is no more than ought to be expected of *any* generation of christians; and every man so persuaded, may both lawfully and laudably solicit it from those who have the power, and

who cannot modestly be supposed not to know that it is their duty.

2. The other thing offered by way of silencing these teazers of establishments, is, that their demands are vague and not explicit. "Tell us only what you would have, and you "shall either be gratified, or we will give you "unanswerable reasons why not."—This, it seems, is the *fort* of our present anti-reformers; and he must be a little hardy who would attempt to storm it. The author of *The Confessional* is no such adventurer, though he hath been called *too peremptory for an Inquirer*. To conciliate the mind of the worthy person who thought him so, he begs leave to express his demands in that gentleman's own words; *viz.* "An ecclesiastical constitution, "calculated to comprehend all that hold the "fixed and fundamental principles and points "of faith, in which all serious and sincere "protestants of every denomination are unanimously agreed, and to exclude those only "that hold the peculiar tenets that ESSENTIALLY distinguish all true protestantism from "popery." To the establishment of *this* ecclesiastical constitution the author of *The Confessional* never will be an enemy.

PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION:

CONTAINING

REMARKS on a late *Vindication of the Right of Protestant Churches to require the Clergy to subscribe to an established Confession of Faith and Doctrines.*

HÆ TIBI ERUNT ARTES!

THE favourable reception *The Confessional* hath met with from the public, though it will not be admitted as an argument of the merit of the book, is undeniably an argument of something of much more consequence. It is an argument, that the love of RELIGIOUS LIBERTY is still warm and vigorous in the hearts of a considerable number of the good people of *England*, notwithstanding the various endeavours of interested and irreligious men, in these latter as well as in former times to check and discourage it; and notwithstanding the desponding apprehensions of some good men, that these *stifiers* had well nigh succeeded in their unrighteous attempts.

It now appears, that a little plain reasoning, illustrated by a few indisputable facts, in favour of this invaluable legacy of our protestant ancestors, hath been sufficient to engage the attention of many well-wishers to its preservation and perpetuity, who, perhaps, might not otherwise have been aware of the present importance of such a disquisition ; but who, by having their observation turned upon the artful and indirect methods that have been taken by some of its insidious adversaries, under the mask of friendship, to diminish its estimation, may, by the blessing of God, be excited to a greater degree of vigilance, that this fountain of all true piety and evangelical virtue may never more be choaked up by the rubbish of traditional formalities.

The *Confessional* hath likewise had the good fortune to make another valuable discovery ; namely, that encroachments on religious liberty in protestant communities, by whatever specious pretences they are introduced, can never be defended upon protestant principles.

A divine, of good learning and character, who occupies, with reputation, one of the first theological chairs in *Europe*, hath tried his strength upon this fatherless production of the press,* without foreseeing, I dare say, that he would so suddenly meet with a more able opponent from another quarter ; who hath shewn, in a masterly manner, how little definitions and distinctions, which pass, perhaps with applause, in the schools for sound and scientific,

* In a *Vindication* of the right of protestant churches to require the clergy to subscribe to an established confession of faith and doctrines.

are to be depended upon, when confronted by scripture and common sense.*

In this excellent and decisive little tract, the author of the *Confessional* thought he had so far found his account, that he determined, when a second edition of his book was called for, to pass over, in the revisal of it, the learned professor's *vindication* in profound silence, and to leave it in that state of *inefficiency* to which the author of the *Examination* had reduced it.

But some of his friends, by whose superior judgment he hath greatly profited on other occasions, observing to him, that some of Dr. *Rutherforth's* strictures might be understood to affect the *Confessional* in particular, apart from his general argument, it was thought necessary, that particular answers should be given to these strictures; which accordingly will be found in some notes, subjoined to those passages against which the learned professor hath pointed his efforts.

In running over the *Vindication*, the author of the *Confessional* could not avoid observing several flaws in the learned professor's foundation, which have, in a great measure, been left untouched by the *Examiner;* who, perceiving that it would be sufficient for his purpose to expose the futility of the professor's *conclusions*, candidly left him his *premises*, whereon to erect another sort of fabrick, in case occasion and encouragement should once

* *Examination of* Dr. *Rutherforth's* argument, respecting the right of protestant churches to require the clergy to subscribe to an established confession &c.

more call him forth to vindicate the right of requiring subscriptions in protestant churches.

The author of the *Confessional* is not a little concerned, that he cannot follow this benevolent example. For, as it hath been thought proper that he should make his own particular defence, it is become indispensably necessary for him to lay open the several infirmities of the professor's *foundation*, which will now appear in a few short remarks on the three first paragraphs of his *Vindication*.

The learned professor opens his charge with a recital of the thirty-sixth canon of the church of *England*, as if that particular law of our church was to have been the *principal*, if not the *sole* object of his *Vindication*. Nor, indeed, had that been the case, and supposing him to have succeeded in his undertaking, would he, in my apprehension, have come short of his *more general* design. For, after having effectually vindicated the *right* of the protestant church of *England* to require subscription to her confession of faith and doctrines, upon the foot of this canon, he might safely have inferred the right of all other protestant churches, as a thing of course; inasmuch as it may be presumed, that none of their ordinances or injunctions, requiring subscription to their respective confessions, are expressed in terms more strict and precise than those of this canon.

But, instead of undertaking the particular vindication of our own system, he declares, that "he does not design, at present, to enquire into the *force* and *meaning* of this subscription, [the subscription enjoined by this

" canon,] when it is applied to these articles " [the xxxix articles of the church of *Eng-* " *land*] in particular." And herein I cannot but commend his discretion ; for, as it happens, we have certain laws of the *State* enjoining subscription, which do *not* require that *every* person who is received into the ministry, or is admitted to an ecclesiastical living, shall acknowledge, by subscribing, &c. that *all* and *every* the thirty-nine articles are agreeable to the word of God. The case stands thus :

The statute, 13 *Eliz.* c. 12, enjoins subscription to all the articles of religion which *only concern the confession of the true christian faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments*, comprised in a book imprinted, intituled, " *Arti-* " *cles*," &c. as in the title of our present articles. This bill had passed the house of commons five years before, namely, 8 *Eliz.* and was rejected by the Lords ; and being now resumed in 1571, some members of the house of commons, and among the rest Sir *Peter Wentworth*, were sent to the Archbishop of *Canterbury* [*Parker*,] for the articles which then [*viz.* 1571] passed the house. The Archbishop took that occasion to expostulate with the members who were sent to him, *why they did put out of the book the articles for the homilies, consecrating of bishops, and such like?* [meaning, by the *limiting clause*, confining subscription to articles only of a certain tenor.] *Surely, Sir, said* Wentworth, *because we were so occupied in other matters, that we had no time to examine them how they agreed with the word of God. What!* said the Archbishop, *surely you mistook the matter; you will refer*

yourselves wholly to us therein. Sir *Peter* replied, *No, by the faith I bear to God, we will pass nothing before we understand what it is; for that were but to make you popes: make you popes who list; for* WE *will make you none.**

From this conversation it appears,

1. That the lay part of the legislature, of that time, thought themselves as competent judges of what did, or did not, agree with the word of God, as the bishops.

2. That the lay part of the legislature of that time thought, that the leaving it to the governors of the church, exclusive of themselves, to determine what articles of religion should be established for the public confession, was to make them popes: that is to say, invest them with a power which, upon the principles of the reformation, did not belong to them.

3. That, by passing the act with the *limiting* clause, the legislature did not only *think*, but did *determine*, that the governors of the church of *England* had no right to require the inferior clergy to subscribe to any confession of faith and doctrines, without the authority of parliament

4. That by passing the act *with the limiting clause*, no other subscription is required by it than to those articles which *only concern the confession of the true christian faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments.*

5. That no other act having repealed this act, or in any wise contravened it, touching subscription to the articles of religion; and the act of uniformity in particular, 14 *Car.* II. ha-

* Journal of parliament, by Sir *Simmonds D'Ewes*, p. 239.

ving referred to it, as the *standing law*, concerning subscription to the articles of religion; the limiting clause is in full force to this hour.*

* Great hath been the wrangling upon the queſtion, whether the clergy are not, by this act, obliged to ſubſcribe to the whole xxxix articles, notwithſtanding the limitation in the firſt paragraph of it. The lateſt account we have of this matter is from Dr. *Burn*, who ſays, that, "in *practice*, it ſeemeth to have been generally underſtood, that the ſubſequent clauſes in the act, requiring ſubſcription in time to come to the ſaid articles, do refer to the whole book of articles abovementioned, and not to thoſe only which were at that time required to be aſſented to and ſubſcribed." *Eccleſ. Law*, Title *Articles*, p. 74. I am unwilling to aſk, in *whoſe* practice it ſeemeth to have been ſo underſtood? as a practice directly contrary to an act of parliament can convey no very advantageous idea of the practiſer's integrity. The Doctor proceeds to give the reaſon why it hath been ſo underſtood: "For, ſaith he, there is no other act of parliament that enjoins the ſubſcription of perſons admitted to benefices." But, what then? Does this circumſtance give the *practiſers* authority to act as if there was? What would become of our liberties and properties, if *practiſers* in *civil* caſes were allowed to make laws according *to their own underſtandings*, in default of better authority from an act of parliament? To go on a little farther. This learned and worthy perſon, by obſerving that "the act of uniformity, 14 C. II. doth not extend to perſons admitted to benefices *in this reſpect*," ſeems to think that the act of uniformity extends to *ſome* perſons in *ſome other* reſpect, than the act of the 13 *Eliz.* extends to perſons admitted to benefices. But though the learned canoniſt hath either forgot, or did not chuſe to remark it, it is certain, that neither *heads of colleges* nor *lecturers* are obliged by the act of uniformity, to ſubſcribe to *any other* articles than the xxxix articles *mentioned* in the ſtatute of 13 *Eliz.*; and the articles *mentioned* in *that* ſtatute *to be ſubſcribed*, are thoſe articles which *only concern the confeſſion of the true chriſtian faith, and the doctrine of the ſacraments*. So that it ſhould ſeem, whoever requires any clergyman to ſubſcribe any other articles of religion, beſides thoſe mentioned and deſcribed in the firſt ſection of the 13 *Eliz.* hath not the authority of *any* ſtatute for that practice; and how far ſuch practice can be juſtified in a proteſtant ſtate, and in a country that calls itſelf a land of religious and civil liberty, by *any other* authority, is to me an impenetrable ſecret. I cannot leave this ſubject without bearing my teſtimony to the candour and moderation of many of Dr. *Burn's* remarks, in relation to eccleſiaſtical authority: Of the former, I take his giving the whole converſation between

Now, had the learned professor vindicated this canon upon the same principles, and by the

Archbishop *Parker* and Sir *Peter Wentworth* to be a striking instance. The Doctor, indeed, tells us, that *Wentworth* was sent to the tower, *for the speech* wherein he related this conversation himself in the house of commons. But, lest this should make some awkward impressions on the unwary reader, it will be necessary to remark, that *Wentworth's* assertion, concerning the articles of religion, made no part of his *offence*, as appears from his examination, printed immediately after his speech, in the Journal of Sir *Simmonds D'Ewes*. As I am upon this subject, I shall take the freedom to rectify another oversight of Dr. *Burn's*, which is too material to be passed by. At the bottom of page 75, he says, "and, by the statute 13 *Eliz.* "if any person shall advisedly maintain—any doctrine—contrary— "*to any of the* xxxix *articles*," &c. There is no mention in the whole act of xxxix *articles*. The words are, any of the *said* articles, *viz.* the doctrinal and sacramental articles mentioned in the first section. This paragraph, indeed, in the act 13 *Eliz.* here cited by Dr. *Burn*, is a plain proof, that by the words *the said articles*, or *any of the said articles*, no other articles are meant, in any of the *subsequent clauses*, besides those articles described in the first section. They must be little conversant in the history of those times, who can suppose, that the parliament of 1571 would consign any minister to censure, and finally to deprivation, for maintaining any thing contrary to the *disciplinarian* articles. Archbishop *Laud's* word will pass, where mine will not; I will, therefore, risque this matter upon his credit. "If you will be pleased to look back, says he, "and consider who they were that governed businesses in 1571, and "rid the church almost at their pleasure; and how potent the an- "cestors of these libellers [*Prynne*, *Burton*, *Bastwick*, &c.] be- "gan then to grow, you will think it no hard matter to have the ar- "ticles printed, and this clause [meaning the first clause of the xxth "article] left out." *Rushworth*, Hist. Coll. Vol. III. Appendix, p. 131. Here, I suppose, we have the limitation upon subscriptions, 13 *Eliz.* sufficiently accounted for.

The laborious Dr. *Rutherforth*, in a pamphlet which he calls *a defence of his charge*, hath taken great pains to prove, that the *limitation* in the statute 13 *Elizabeth* is *not* in force at this time, and for this purpose quotes the 30th and 31st sections of the act of uniformity, 14 *Car.* II. chap. iv. which, according to him, "*re-* "*quire* subscription to the 36th article of religion concerning the "book of ordination." Whereas those sections *require* neither more nor less, than, that they, *who by this act, or by* ANY OTHER

same arguments he employs to prove the *general right*, he would, too probably, have laid a

LAW THEN IN FORCE *were required to subscribe the said articles*, should not mistake one book for another.' The question still remains, whether any person was, by this act, or by any other law then in force, required to subscribe this 36th article. But, not to deprive the learned professor of his whole cavil at once, let us suppose for the present, that a subscription to the 36th article is here required. In what light is the requisition to be understood? Merely as a single exception to the limiting words of Queen *Elizabeth's* act, and, consequently, by a known rule, a *confirmation* of them *in non exceptis*. For this being the single specification of an article out of the bounds of the limitation to be found in this whole act of uniformity, the subscriber is manifestly left (if these two sections are to be considered as enjoining *any* subscription) at full liberty with respect to those other articles that do *not* concern *the confession of the true christian faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments;* and this is all that the professor can possibly profit by his blunder. And of this indeed he seems to be aware, and therefore his next attempt is to make sure work, and by the help of Mr. *Cay*, to repeal the statute, 13 *Elizabeth* with respect to the subscription of *any* ecclesiastical persons whatever, who have been ordained by protestant bishops. For if the limitation *only* concerned papists, and such as received their orders, in foreign churches, the subscription enjoined did *not* concern those who received orders according to the forms of the church of *England*, nor does it concern any such to this hour. And the consequence will be, (if we take Dr. *Burn* along with us, who appears to know something more of the matter than either Dr. *Rutherforth* or Mr. *Cay*) that persons *admitted to benefices* are not bound by the statute law to subscribe *any* articles. For Dr. *Burn* is clear, "that the act of uniformity, 14 Car. II. "*doth* "*not extend* to such persons in this respect," that is, in respect to their subscription to the articles. The late bishop *Conybeare*, in his sermon on *the case of subscription*, p. 10, says, "The reason why "the *clergy* in particular are required to subscribe, is this, because "they are *teachers*," and immediately refers to the act 13 *Elizabeth*. The term *teachers* indeed doth not occur in any part of the act, but the *reason* is clearly implied in the preamble, *viz. That the churches of the Queen's Majesty's dominions may be served with* PASTORS *of sound religion*. The reference would have been impertinent and absurd, had the preacher, in agreement with the professor's ideas, confined the word, *pastors*, to such of the clergy only, as had presbyterian or popish ordination. *Strype* and *Neale*,

foundation for some variance between church and state. For the statute, with these limiting

whom the professor cites upon this occasion without understanding them, knew very well what they said, and are indeed very substantial witnesses against him. *Strype* says, " the persons who had " either popish or presbyterian ordination were *comprehended*," (*Neale* says, were *included*) " in the limitation abovementioned." Which manner of expression implies, it seems, in the professor's common sense, the *exclusion* of all others. Not unlike the fellow who having sold a couple of fowls, *out and out*, made a *cludation* for the feathers. How this act is to be understood, appears by the marginal note to the first section of it, which is coæval with the publication of the statute itself, and is of more authority than an hundred *abridgers*. It is in these words, *every ecclesiastical person shall subscribe to the articles touching the confession of the faith, and declare his assent thereunto.* Which shews, even to demonstration, that the limitation runs through the whole act, and that, to foist in, after the words, *the said articles*, the words *whereupon it was agreed*, &c. into any part of it, is nothing better than downright forgery. Mr. *Selden*, who probably was not less able to interpret an act of Parliament than Mr. *Cay*, speaking of the articles, says, " there is a secret concerning them. Of late, ministers have " subscribed to *all* of them ; but by the act of Parliament that con- " firmed them, they ought only to subscribe to those articles, which " contain matter of faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments, *as ap-* " *pears by the first subscriptions.*" Table-talk, title ARTICLES. Mr. *Selden* indeed was no friend to *church-secrets*, and on that account may be an exceptionable witness with our professor. He appeals however we see to the *practice*, which was only to be controuled, by the *fortification* (as the professor's spiritual progenitor *Heylin* very properly calls it) of canons and synodical acts. For, as the same *Heylin* is obliged to own, " the lawyers were clear, " that *by the statute*, no subscription was to be required, but only " unto points of doctrine." *History of the Presbyterians*, p. 269. I will just give the learned professor one more authority from a man after his own heart, the famous Sir *Roger L'Estrange*, who having occasion to assert King *James* the second's power to dispense with, make, inforce, or abrogate, ecclesiastical laws, *jure regali*, uses, among others, the following argument. " Before the 13 *Elizabeth* " c. 12, subscriptions were enjoined by the regal power ; and " though this Statute required subscription, yet, *it being to the ar-* " *ticles of religion which only concern the confession of the true*

words in it, being still in full force, and not contravened by any other statute whatever, the learned professor, in vindicating the right of church-governors to require this *canonical* subscription of *every* minister, and to *all* and *every* the xxxix articles under an authority *different* from that which enacted the *limiting* law, could hardly have avoided running foul of the *civil* constitution of his country; more

" *christian faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments* comprised, " &c. it was *deemed by the bishops to be insufficient ;* who there- " fore apply themselves to their Prince, that by her Majesty's power " ecclesiastical, they might enjoin a fuller subscription, not only to " the articles of faith and doctrines of the sacraments, but unto the " government, the rites and ceremonies of the church ; and such " as refused this larger subscription, though they would readily " subscribe, *as by this statute required*, were suspended and de- " prived ; and has not his present Majesty the same power that " Queen *Elizabeth* had ?" Lord *Sommers's* tracts, vol. I. p. 241. What is it the professor would be at ? Would he have it understood that there was no difference between the subscription required by the statute 13 *Elizabeth* and the subscription required by the bishops articles (as they were called) and afterwards by the canons of 1603 ? Or would he have it, that the difference only subsisted till the act of uniformity, 14 *Car.* II. If the first, it will be incumbent upon him to prove, that they who refused to subscribe the articles touching church Government, or other articles, which do *not* concern *the confession of the true faith, or the doctrine of the sacraments*, and who for such refusal were imprisoned, suspended, deprived, &c. were *legally* convicted *upon the statute*, even any one of them. If he says, that the last act of uniformity took away this difference, he must then shew, in contradiction to Dr. *Burn*, that the said act extends to persons admitted to benefices in respect to their subscribing the articles. I cannot conclude without observing, that this case has never yet received any solemn decision upon a fair trial at law. Should that ever happen, I have no doubt but the Clergy would from thenceforth be, in this respect, put upon a footing with his Majesty's lay subjects, and be no longer liable to the bondage of a precarious canonical imposition, in express contradiction to a plain act of Parliament.

especially as the argument, by which he vindicates the *general right* of protestant church-governors to require subscription to *some* confession of faith and doctrines, must conclude for the general right of such governors to establish any confession of faith and doctrines, to which they have a right to require subscription; otherwise his argument has very little business with the writer, who *led* the learned professor *to employ the thoughts of the* Essex *clergy on the subject of subscriptions.* A right to *require* subscription, without a right to *establish* the formulary to be subscribed, would amount to little more than *Glendower's* right *to call spirits from the vasty deep.* To which any one might rejoin, with equal pertinence and propriety, as *Percy* does to the said *Glendower*:

Why, so can I, and so can any man;
But will they come when you do call?

This may serve for *one* answer, among others, that might be given, to a question which I have heard often asked, *viz.* Why the learned professor would set at the head of his discourse, as it were by way of a text, a particular law of a particular church, into the *force* and *meaning* of which he did not design to enquire?

But, to borrow his own language, upon a later occasion, "instead of considering what "he *omits*, we will enquire how well he succ- "ceeds in what he *attempts**."

He undertakes, then, "to vindicate the ge- "neral right which the governors of our own,

* See Dr. *Rutherforth's* second Vindication, p. 2.

" or of any other protestant church, have to " enjoin, that all those, who are admitted to " the office of public teaching in it, shall sub- " scribe to the truth of SOME confession of " faith and doctrines."

Some confession of faith and doctrines there is undoubtedly in the scriptures; and there is nothing in the plan of *vindication*, as it is *here* laid out, which hinders you from understanding, that the right to be vindicated extends no farther than to the enjoining a subscription to the truth of the *scripture*-confession of faith and doctrines. But, as we go along with the learned professor, we perceive, that, besides the *general right* to enjoin subscriptions, there is a *general benefit* proposed by them; for the securing of which, it seems, a subscription to the truth of the scriptures, or of a confession of faith and doctrines, in merely scripture-words, would not be sufficient.

But, if so, is not the learned professor's *design* worded in too loose and captious a manner? Is there not some *descriptive* word wanting, to enable us to distinguish the *sort* of confession to which church-governors are said to have a right to enjoin subscription, from the confession of faith and doctrines contained in the scriptures, or a confession of faith and doctrines drawn up in merely scripture-terms?

Lest, therefore, it should be said, that a learned professor, in a celebrated university, had put more into his *conclusion* than was contained in his *premises*, I will venture, with his leave, to supply this descriptive word, which is some way or other dropped out of the propo-

sition. The clause should have run thus—*shall subscribe to the truth of some* SYSTEMATICAL *confession of faith and doctrines.* And I make this emendation with the more freedom, as, without it, some people might be of opinion, that the learned professor's dispute with the author of the *Confessional* could hardly be kept on foot; or, at the best, would presently dwindle into insignificance: For the latter having allowed that "a declaration from a public pastor, that he believes the scriptures, and will "make the contents of them the rule of his "teaching, is a very moderate security, and "no more than the society with which he is "connected may with reason expect*;" the question, in whom the *right* of requiring this security is vested, is hardly worth debating.

We are now arrived at the corner-stone of the argument, which is thus laid down. "The "universal church of Christ is a society, which "he instituted, and of which he is the head, "including in it all those, who profess to believe in his name, and have been received "by baptism into the number of his disciples."

From this definition we are referred to LOCKE on *Toleration:* Works, vol. ii. p. 255, which seems to denote, if not that the definition was taken from *Locke* on *Toleration*, yet that it is agreeable to his sense expressed in the page referred to. But having a violent suspicion, that Mr. *Locke* would not, at any rate, have subscribed the professor's definition, I resolved to have recourse to the passage cited; but the

* *Confessional*, p. 344, of the first edition.

edition I use, being that of 1727, exhibiting nothing applicable to the professor's definition, in the page so numbered, I was obliged to make a random search, and, for some time, in vain; which I mention by way of intimation to the learned *Vindicator*, that though he is above being *fescued* himself,* yet that we, his inferiors, are humble enough to desire as express directions as we can obtain to the *sense* and meaning of those authors with whom it is our fortune to be concerned.

At length, at page 235, of the second volume of *Locke's* works, of the edition abovementioned, I found the following definition of *a church*.

" *A church*, says this incomparable writer, I " take to be a voluntary society of men, join- " ing themselves together of their own accord, " in order to the public worshiping of God, " in such manner as they judge acceptable to " him, and effectual to the salvation of their " souls."

This is all the definition of a church I can find in Mr. *Locke's* letters on *Toleration*. If there is any other in them more to the learned professor's purpose, he will certainly be able to produce it. If there is not, it will, I apprehend, be incumbent upon him to reconcile *his own* definition with *this*. The professor's GOOD FAITH requires this of him.†

But whether he can accomplish this reconciliation or not, if the learned professor's definition will stand the test of a *protestant* exami-

* Dr. Rutherforth's second Vindication, p. 4.

† The learned professor, saith, " this shot is ill aimed and flies " over his head." Metaphorically speaking, a shot aimed at a man's *good faith*, is aimed rather at the *heart* than the *head*. How-

nation, it will be, we own, less material to him what Mr. *Locke* thought of any church.

ever I am glad the *head* has escaped, as the loss of *such a head*, would have been irreparable. But while the professor was ducking the head to avoid the twenty pounder from the heavy artillery, he was not aware of a shot from the small arms, which took him a little lower. "The *fescue*," saith the *shifty* professor, "is so held out, as to point, "not at the definition which goes before, but at the sentence which "follows it. *My* usual practice is to place the letters of reference, "at, or near, the begining, and not at the end of the passage, to "which they belong: and this rule is observed here. I designed to "refer my readers to that part of *Locke's* letters on Toleration, "where he says, *The end of a religious society is the public wor-* "*ship of God, and by means thereof, the acquisition of eternal* "*life**." Miserable subterfuge! By this *accommodation* of his *fescue*, the incautious reader is given to understand, that the end of A RELIGIOUS SOCIETY assigned by *Locke*, is assigned by him as the end of THIS SOCIETY which the professor had just before defined. Is not this plainly and positively fathering upon *Locke* his own absurd *definition* immediately preceding? Will his shifting the *fescue* acquit him of the fraud, or enable the reader to find in *Locke's* letters on Toleration, the definition in question? Conscious of this misrepresentation, and abashed as much as such a writer can be, by the detection, the professor next endeavours, by a detail of dull prevarication, to make this same Locke father the consequences he, the professor, draws, in favour of church governors, from his own popish definition. This he attempts, by citing from Mr. Locke's Commentary on Eph. iv. a passage which begins thus: "He "(CHRIST) *alone*, framing the constitution of his new government, "*by his own power*, and according to such rules as *he thought* "*best*." Is there then, no difference between the power by which Christ acts *alone*, and the authority ascribed by this learned professor to modern church-governors: (in consequence of *his* definition of the church) *viz.* of framing the constitution of church-government according to such rules as THEY *think best*? And yet, from this single instance, the professor has the modesty to insinuate, that Mr. *Locke* must either be consistent with Dr. *Rutherforth*, or inconsistent with St. *Paul* and himself. To do him justice, however, feeling the smart of an attack upon his *good faith*, he is willing to divert the stroke from his *heart* to his *head*. For allowing the reference to be *fairly* made, the application of it is, it seems, to be taken for a *mere mistake*, and his readers must get clear of it as they may. If I were worthy to offer a word of admonition to the learned professor,

* Defence, p. 20, 21.

The first objection I make to the learned professor's definition is, that it wants explanation. He hath not informed us, whether this universal church of Christ is a *visible* or an *invisible* church; an omission, I apprehend, of no small consequence to the subsequent parts of the learned professor's *Vindication*. Till this be known, we are at a loss how far to admit his scheme of church-government. We must, therefore, try to find out this circumstance as well as we can.

The members of the *invisible* church of

it should be, to leave St. *Paul* and Mr. *Locke* to take their own way, and to stick to his *Hooker*, in matters of church-government. He will never have any luck in attempting to press either the apostle or the philosopher into his service. How poorly he comes off in his attempts upon the former, may be seen in Dr. *Dawson's* admirable letter to Dr. *Rutherforth*, occasioned by his second Vindication. On the other hand, he plumes himself in this *Defence*, p. 35, on Mr. *Locke's* "consenting that *these men*" [not, *such protestants as these*, as the Professor has *amended* the passage] "should have *a ruler*" [not *rulers*, as the professor cites it, and consequently not, whether *bishops* or *presbyters*, but, as Mr. *Locke* hath stated it, *a bishop or presbyter*, without excluding even *a pope*] "of "their church, established by such a long series of succession, as "they judge necessary." What advantage can the professor draw from this *consent*, even after *tutoring* it, in the exuberance of his *good faith*, to his taste? I make no doubt but Mr. *Locke* would have given his consent to a congregation of *Mahometans*, to be governed by a mufti deriving his authority from *Mahomet* by an uninterruped succession, upon the same condition that he gives it to *such protestants as these*. And what is all that to the argument in the *Confessional?* Would not a man of *common feelings* have had some little remorse in perceiving that he must first *falsify* the passage in question, before he could with any shew of pertinence reproach his adversary for the *suppression* of it? He would have a fine time of it, who should undertake to follow a writer gifted with these sophisticating talents, step by step, through a controversial pamphlet of 114 pages.

Christ, who, as all judicious divines agree, are in a state of actual acceptance with him, are not discernible by any external marks or tokens whatever. But in this definition we have *two* outward visible marks, pointing out those who are members of Christ's universal church: 1. Profession of belief; and, 2. Reception into the number of Christ's disciples by baptism. These *visible* tokens determine the professor's *universal* church to be a *visible* church.

Now I own it would puzzle me extremely, if it were my affair, how to provide for the government of this *universal visible* church, otherwise than by introducing an *universal visible* governor. Christ, the head, is *invisible;* and we have no way of coming at his directions for church-government, but by having recourse to the written record of them in the scriptures. But though these written directions might do well enough for the government of one of Mr. *Locke's voluntary* societies, in a state of *independency*, yet I much question how far they would be deemed sufficient to settle an uniformity of government among particular churches; which being, according to the professor, *parts* of the *universal visible* church, must be not only in *connection* with it, but *dependent* upon it. A *particular* society, which is a part of an *universal* society, can neither be *voluntary* nor *independent.*

Again, we shall hear presently of some persons, "who are appointed, under Christ, to "superintend and govern particular churches." I hardly think the learned professor will pretend, that these persons receive their appointment *immediately* from Christ. How they

come by it, we shall have occasion to ask by and by. In the mean time, the matter of fact is, that they differ widely from each other, not only concerning the nature and extent of this appointment, but concerning the authority under which they respectively claim it. Allow the particular churches, over which these persons preside, to be *parts* of the *universal visible* church, and you must allow their governors or superintendents to be members of an universal visible government; but how shall these superintendents, or particular governors, who differ so widely concerning their authority and appointment, be brought into order, without the superintendency of an universal visible governor? Does not the learned professor know, that it is from this undeniable fact, *viz.* the variance among particular churches concerning church-authority, and this absurd and groundless pretence, that particular churches are *de jure* parts of the universal visible church, laid together, that the papists infer the necessity of an *universal visible* church governor.

But this *necessity* all protestant churches vehemently disclaim, and the church of *England* as vehemently and as loudly as any of them. And, therefore, I should think the church of *England* would hardly agree to have any of her rights founded upon so precarious a definition of the universal church of Christ, as leaves an opening whereat the pope may be slipped in upon her unawares.

The professor proceeds: "The end and purpose for which this society was instituted, "is to lead men to eternal life, by the preservation and advancement of true religion."

A society, *instituted by Christ himself*, "for "the end and purpose of leading men to eter- "nal life," implies, that no man can attain eternal life, except he is a member of *this* society. Otherwise we must say, that Christ instituted a society for an end and purpose that might be brought about without it, which no true believer will allow. The result is, that to be in communion with *this* society, is necessary to salvation.

The reader will not forget, that *this* society is an *universal visible church*, of which all particular churches are parts, the church of *Rome*, as well as others, as hath been shewn by the accurate *Examiner* of Dr. *Rutherforth's* Vindication. Therefore, to be in communion with the church of *Rome* is necessary to salvation.

An ingenious prelate of the established church, and no enemy to church-authority, was so sensible whither the necessity of church-communion, even with a national protestant establishment, would conduct us, that he hesitates not to declare, that this doctrine "alters "the *terms of salvation*, as they are delivered "in the gospel, which are, *faith in Christ*, "*and repentance towards God;* by adding "others to them, such as *fellow-membership* "*in church communion.*"— "A church," adds he, "acting with this spirit, not only throws "off subjection, but assumes the sovereignty; "and is no longer the sheepfold of the good "shepherd, but the den of Antichrist, the "thief, and robber." What, then, must we think of the *churchman* who preaches this doctrine?

Again. " Though for the better convey-
" ance of the glad tidings of salvation, says
" this learned bishop, it was expedient that
" the disciples of Christ should be formed into
" a kind of *sodality;* yet the founder of our
" holy faith never intended this, or any other
" religious society, to be part of its essentials,
" as appears from his express words in my text
" (*Luke* ix. 49.) where he receives one, who
" was propagating the faith in him, to all the
" benefits and prerogatives of his religion,
" though he was out of the pale of that frater-
" nity, he had just then instituted."*

But our professor, we see, not content with confining the necessity of *church-membership* to some particular church, hath, by making every particular church a part of the *universal visible* church, extended the necessity of *church-membership* to salvation, to the *universal visible* society, and consequently to *every particular* church, whose members have to shew the *two common marks* of their belonging to the *universal visible* church, which, without doubt, the papists have to shew as evidently as the members of any *other* particular church.

It is true, our professor, to get rid of a *difficulty* he met with in the *Confessional*, hath thought fit to say, " separate churches are, in
" respect of one another, like separate men.
" If each individual protestant holds his reli-
" gion *independently* of all others, so does each
" particular protestant church."†

I will not suspect the IF in this passage to be

* Bishop Warburton's first sermon on Church Communion, in the 2d volume of his Sermons, p. 161—163.

† Vindication, p. 15, 16.

meant for a drawback upon the concession, in case of need; because the learned professor hath acknowledged it in the amendment of his bill,* as an *express declaration*, that "each "particular protestant church holds its reli-"gion independently of all others;" which, however, cannot be true, if *each particular* church is "a part of the *universal visible* "church, instituted by Christ himself." Where there is a religious connection, there must be a religious dependency, and especially where the connection is such, that it cannot be broken, without defeating the end and purpose of the institution by which it was created.

We have here, then, two plain propositions laid down by one and the same writer. 1. *Every particular church is a part of the universal visible church, instituted by Christ himself.* And, 2. *Each particular protestant church holds its religion independently of all others.* Now, as one of these propositions must, on the mere consideration of *self-consistency*, be either *retracted* or *quibbled away*, I cannot but hope the learned professor will abide by the latter, and then let him work his will upon the former and welcome. It will give me great pleasure to have it in my power to congratulate a very valuable part of his majesty's subjects, I mean the protestant dissenters, on this happy change in their religious affairs. On this principle of *independency*, all idea of *schism*, which hath stuck so long to their respective churches, must vanish away of course. I am of opinion it may even *christianize* the honest quakers: for, the connection and dependency of *all* particular religious societies upon the professor's *uni-*

* Second Vindication, p. 20.

versal visible church being dissolved, the sincerely pious and good among *them* may still be members of the *invisible* church of Christ, notwithstanding the absence of *one* of the marks, without which they could not, according to the professor, be *included* even in the large and capacious bosom of the *universal visible* church.

As to what may become of *national churches*, *exclusive establishments*, *test-laws*, and *alliances*, in those protestant states where each protestant church holds its religion *independently* of *all* others, I list not to inquire. They are already in very good hands; I mean those of the learned professor, who, I doubt not, will take sufficient care that they come to no detriment, notwithstanding the aukward aspect his doctrine of *independency* may seem to bear towards them.

But to go on with the learned professor. "It is therefore the duty of those who are ap- "pointed under him [Christ] to superintend "and govern particular churches—"

Before we proceed any farther, pray, who are they that are so appointed, and how do they come by their appointment? These are no unnecessary questions; for, till we know the men, and the authority by which they act, we can neither judge of the extent of *their* duty in governing, nor of *our* duty in submitting to them.

The learned Vindicator does not say they are appointed BY Christ, but UNDER Christ; which implies, that their appointment is conveyed to them from Christ through some *medium;* which, as the governors themselves, as well as the churches they superintend, are *visible*, should be *visible* too.

One thing must be agreed on all hands, namely, that an *immediate visible* appointment of governors or superintendents *under* Christ, and *by* Christ himself, was never vouchsafed to any churches, since Christ's appearance on earth, but to the first christian churches in which his apostles ministered. I would, therefore, willingly be informed, how the governors of protestant churches can make their title, or their appointment, under Christ, to govern, appear to the satisfaction of the churches to be governed; and, particularly, to govern in the manner contended for by the learned professor, in the course of his Vindication?

The most natural expedient suggested by the professor's scheme, is for particular churches, which, *ex hypothesi*, are *parts* of the *universal visible* church, to apply to the *universal visible* church, to have such governors appointed and properly authorized, under Christ, to serve their several occasions as they arise. But, then, how could the *universal visible* church accommodate them with such governors, otherwise than by referring them to the *universal visible* head; whose substitutes the governors, appointed by him, of course must be? But protestants, as observed above, would have their objections to this sort of appointment, as they absolutely deny that any such character, as that of an *universal visible* governor, has any business to interpose in any such appointment; not to mention that for a *particular protestant* church to apply to the *universal visible* church, on any such account, would be to give up that *independency* which the learned professor expressly declares to belong to each of them.

There are some who tell us, that church-governers take or receive this *appointment under Christ*, by way of succession from the apostles. But this will hardly pass with protestants, who consider that the pretended governors of the universal visible church say the very same thing, in asserting the plenitude of papal power. And it happens, that some protestant divines, of the first account among us, in putting a negative upon this claim of the *Roman* pontiffs, have done it in such terms, and by such arguments, as clearly and undeniably prove, that the claim of apostolic succession, made by *any* church-governors, is not at *all* more admissable than the claim of the pope to the succession of St. *Peter* in particular.*

Mr. *Locke*, indeed, hath effectually blocked up this channel of *appointment* by an argument, which will admit of no reply.

" Some, says he, perhaps may object, that " no such society [as the *voluntary* society " above-mentioned] can be said to be a true " church, unless it have in it a bishop or pres- " byter, with *ruling authority* derived from " the very apostles, and continued down to " the present times by an uninterrupted suc- " cession.

" To these I answer, in the first place, let " them shew me the edict by which Christ has " imposed that law upon his church. And let " not any man think me impertinent, if, in a " thing of this consequence, I require that the " terms of that edict be very express and posi-

* See Dr. Whitby's Sermon on Matth. xii. 7. intituled, *Ritual Observations to give place to Charity;* but more especially the *Appendix*.

" tive: for the promise he has made us, that " *wheresoever two or three are gathered toge-* " *ther in his name, he will be in the midst of* " *them,* seems to imply the contrary. Whe- " ther such an assembly want any thing ne- " cessary to a true church, pray do you con- " sider. Certain I am, that nothing can there " be wanting to the salvation of souls, which " is sufficient to our purpose."*

It appears, then, that our learned professor hath left his premises extremely short and insufficient, in this material article, for the support of his conclusions. For the *appointment* of church-governors *under Christ*, being the supposed foundation of those *rights*, and that *authority*, which the professor vindicates to them, and to which his opponents question their title, it is by no means to be taken for granted; but will require, on the part of the Vindicator, the clearest and most explicit proof.

But we must take the professor's *performance as we find it;* and the next point that comes under consideration is the *duty* of these church-governors.—" It is, therefore, the du- " ty of those who are appointed under him to " superintend and govern particular churches, " which are only parts of the universal church, " to secure and promote, as far as they are " able, the true faith and doctrines of the gos- " pel." *Vind.* p. 2.

To this the very candid *Examiner*, giving the professor credit for this *appointment*, and passing by some equivocal words, which would

* First Letter on *Toleration*, Works, fol. 1727. vol. ii. p. 236.

otherwise have required more immediate explanation, answers as follows: "This is as readily "granted as the other (the proposition in the "foregoing period:) granted, however, not as "a just deduction of a duty *peculiar* to church-"governors, but of a duty incumbent on "*every* christian man, on *all* the members of "*every particular* church, whatever office "they may or may not bear in the same."*

But this was not what the professor wanted; and yet, unhappily, was as much as he could demand: for, as the *peculiarity* of the *duty* depended upon the nature and circumstances of the *appointment*, which he had rested upon *his own bare word*, and as he had limited the duty, even with respect to church-governors, by the words *as far as they are able*, he could not safely deny, that it was *equally* the duty of every christian man, who should have abilities *equally* with a church-governor, to secure and promote the true faith and doctrines of the gospel; for this would have been to deny, that it is the duty of every christian to instruct, exhort, and admonish his fellow members, as far as he is able.

But the *peculiarity* could not, after all, be spared; and thus the professor endeavours to recover his title to it.

"This duty, which is common to all chris-"tians, is to be discharged by each, in such a "manner as is suitable to his particular sta-"tion; and, in every society, the station of "the governors of it makes it their *peculiar* "duty to take care, as far as they are able,

* Examination, p. 33.

" that the other members of it, in their respec
" tive stations and callings, advance the pro-
" per ends of it, by the proper and legitimate
" means."*

Now the learned professor hath told us, in express terms, that "the only legitimate means " of advancing and preserving the true reli- " gion of Christ, are instructions in the faith " and doctrines, which he, and his apostles in " his name, delivered to mankind, with ex- " hortations and admonitions to attend to " them, to embrace them, to persevere in " them, and, by a pious and virtuous life and " conversation, to bring forth the proper " fruits of them." *Vind.* p. 3.

Would the learned professor, then, by thus limiting a common duty to particular stations, be understood to mean, that there are christians, to whose particular station it is *unsuitable* to advance and preserve the true religion of Christ, as far as they are able, by *these* legitimate means? or, that it is *unsuitable* to the particular stations of some christians to advance and preserve the true religion, as far as they are able, by any means whatever? If it be not *unsuitable* for a christian, in any station, to advance and preserve true religion, as far as he is able, by some means, what means must he make use of, if these only legitimate means are unsuitable to his particular station?

Or, would the learned professor be understood to mean, that *these* means are *only* then *legitimate* and *proper* means, when in the hands of church-governors; and *improper* and *illegitimate* in the hands of men in *other* sta-

* Second Vindication, p. 28.

tions? If this is his meaning, what is the *duty* he speaks of, as *common to all christians?* And, if neither of these is his meaning, what use would he make of his *analogical* arguments, drawn from the government in *every* society, towards proving the *peculiarity* he wants to *vindicate* to his church-governors? Or, lastly, would he be understood to mean, that the society he speaks of, as instituted by Christ himself, for the end and purpose of leading men to eternal life, is *analogous* to *every* society instituted for *temporal* ends and purposes?

To these questions, I apprehend, the learned professor will be obliged to give answers, for the satisfaction of his concurrent, the Examiner.

However, I cannot but consider the passage I have just cited, from the second Vindication, as a plain overture towards a compromise; and methinks I discern, even through this obscurity and confusion of language, what terms would content the learned professor.—"It is "the duty, he tells us, of those who are ap- "pointed, under Christ, to superintend and "govern particular churches—to secure and "promote, as far as they are able, the true "faith and doctrines of the gospel.

Now it seems to me very likely, that the learned professor would allow the promoting the true faith, &c. to be a duty common to all christians, provided he might have leave to *appropriate* the duty of *securing* the true faith and doctrines of the gospel to the station of church-governors.

To trust the duty of securing, &c. in the hands of the laity, might be attended with great

inconveniences. The people, in that case, might put in their claim to the right of sifting and ascertaining the faith, and soundness in doctrine, of their respective pastors, even after they had passed through the hands of their church-governors. Whereas the governors of the church, having previously *secured* the *true* faith in an established *confession*, the duty of *promoting* it in the terms of that confession might be safely intrusted with christian men in *other* stations.

The learned professor, however, must excuse us, if we take a little time to consider how far it may be adviseable for us to accede to this partition of duty. We shall desire, in the first place, to know, what he means by the word secure, when applied to the faith and doctrines of the gospel! We shall, then, request to be informed, against *what* that faith and those doctrines *want* to be secured? Whether, with respect to their being *recorded*, they are not full as well secured in the scriptures as in any peculiar archives in the keeping of church-governors? And, with respect to their impressions on the human mind or intellect, whether church governors, by virtue of any *peculiar* powers or appointments, can pretend to *secure* any thing relating to them, besides the bare *outward profession* of them? And, lastly, whether the duty of *securing* the faith and doctrines of the gospel, when *appropriated* to church-governors, maynot, at the long run, end in the application of a sort of means, nearly related to a Cardinal's hat and an inquisition; and more particularly, if the religious societies they govern are instituted upon the same plan with *every other* society?

I have now only to add a few words, concerning the candour and ingenuity of our learned professor, in the *management* of his Vindication, which will sufficiently appear by a short comparison of his Exordium with his Peroration.

What he begins to vindicate is only "a general right, which governors of protestant churches have to require assent and subscription to the truth of some confession of faith and doctrines;"* which they, who can satisfy themselves concerning the appointment of his church-governors, might be ready enough to grant him, as they may seem to imply no more than a right to require subscription to the scriptures; and likewise, as he seems particularly shy of even attempting the defence of the confession of his own church. But they, who stoop to this lure, will find themselves drawn in with a witness, in the last page of the pamphlet; where he claims, for his church governors, "a right to secure the teaching of such doctrines to the members of their church, as they judge, upon the best information they can get, to be agreeable to the truth of the gospel."† A claim, which if it should be admitted, would serve to vindicate the particular confession of every church in Christendom, whether protestant or not: for will not the governors of the church of Rome say, that they go upon the best information they can get?

The claim, we see, is founded exactly as it might be, if the scriptures of the New Testa-

* Vindication, p. 1.—† Ibid. p. 18.

ment were lost, and the doctrines of them no way recoverable, but by such information as scraps of tradition, and mutilated and imperfect citations in some old books, would afford. Not the least room is there left, as this claim is stated, for a suspicion that the written gospel, exhibiting the very doctrines of Christ and his apostles, is still in being, and in a condition to be consulted by every man, who wants or desires information. Not the least shadow of a supposition, that, upon the principles of the protestant reformation, every christian not only may, if he will, but is in duty bound to search these scriptures, for his own information, concerning the rule both of his faith and duty, and to follow what he finds there, at all worldly hazards. The whole is founded upon the presumption, that no member of the church, who is *not* a church-governor, may have *better*, or *so good*, or indeed *any* information, concerning the agreement of such and such doctrines with the truth of the gospel, but what his church governors are pleased to impart to him. And, what is the strangest part of the story, this claim is put in by the learned professor, for the governors of protestant churches, even while he is pretending to shew the difference between those churches and the church of Rome !

The learned professor tells us, that " this " difference is remarkable. The church of " Rome cannot change its doctrines, without " giving up its pretensions to infallibility; " whereas protestant churches may be better " informed at one time than at another, and

" may therefore change them, without any " inconsistency."*

That, however, is just as it happens. Before we get to the bottom of the page, we find there are cases, wherein protestant church-governors cannot change the confessions of their churches, without being inconsistent; " namely, without such a weakness and levi- " ty as is unbecoming their office, and incon- " sistent with the trust committed to them." This case happens to be, when they are " led " away by every one who thinks himself able " to reform it; and as often as any are found " who dislike the faith and doctrines con- " tained in it."

To be sure, this is fairly and ingenuously stated, as will appear by a short view of protestant churches, with respect to their confessions, since the commencement of the reformation.

Some of the confessions in protestant churches have been established near two hundred years, during which time various remonstrances have been made by the members of those churches respectively, not only concerning the precarious doctrines contained in the confession, but against the establishment of any such systematical formularies as tests in protestant churches. Even some of the wisest and best of the governors of those churches have confessed, that requiring subscription to such formularies is a great imposition; and have wished to be well rid of some things maintained

* Vind. p. 18.

in them, as matters of which no good account could be given. And such, indeed, has been the language of the most eminent, or at least the most liberal spirited writers in all protestant churches, that they have condemned them, if not in express terms, yet by plain and direct consequences, to be drawn from their principles and reasonings.

This, I suppose, will be considered, by the candid reader, to be a different case from that stated by the professor; where it is represented as if only here and there a conceited wrong-head, or no body knows who, pretending to the character of a reformer, had expressed their dislike of the established confession, without offering any reason.

Now it is well known, that, in some of those churches where these confessions are now, and have been established for the length of time above-mentioned, church-governors have never once taken their church-confession into serious and solemn consideration; never once submitted it to the fair and impartial examination of learned and unbiassed men; or ever declared themselves ready to make such alterations in it as might, upon such examination, appear to be reasonable, necessary, or edifying to the community in which they presided. Have they not rather discouraged all inquiries into the real merits of it? Have not some of them fortified their confession with canons, and terrific menaces, to discourage all disquisitions of that tendency? Have not particular persons been in former times persecuted, in latter times browbeaten, and marked for their even modest, and respectful addresses to their

church-governors to have such matters examined, and, if needful, reformed ?

To what purpose is it, then, to say of those churches, of whose governors this hath been the conduct, that *they make no pretensions to infallibility ?* Are not these the genuine, the natural, the constant effects of those pretensions? To what purpose is it to say of those protestant churches, which have *never sought* for better information, that *they may be better informed at one time than another ?* To what purpose is it to say, that *it is not necessary a protestant church should always maintain the same doctrines*, when nothing but such *necessity* can excuse the refusal of some protestant churches, even upon the most reasonable remonstrances of pious and learned men, to review their doctrines ; and when it is said too, by the same man, and almost in the same breath, that *it is unbecoming the office of church-governors, and inconsistent with the trust committed to them, to change them ;* and this upon the disingenuous and false supposition, that neither the remonstrances, nor the men who have made them, were considerable enough to deserve the least regard ? And, lastly, upon what grounds can the learned professor pretend, that *all protestant churches are open to better information*, when he himself must know, that some of them have shut up their confessions in such fortresses and inclosures, as are, with respect to any better information, impenetrable and inaccessible.

Indeed, upon one supposition, mentioned by the learned professor, *viz.* That protestant churches, *though not infallible, are always in*

the right, nothing can be more impertinent than to solicit them to change any thing that has once got an establishment among them. Our learned *Vindicator* finds fault with this saying, as containing *more smartness of expression than justness of sentiment.* But the *justness of sentiment* does not, I apprehend, come so immediately in question, as the *truth of the fact*; and that is what makes the *expression smart* so much. Be that as it may, the professor dislikes the sentiment, and therefore would mend it; which he tries to do, by telling us, that though protestant churches, or rather church-governors, are ever so wrong in their doctrines, yet, if they think themselves in the right, they are obliged to abide by them; against which there would be little to say, if the professor's consequence were not, that the duty of church-governors, under this persuasion, leads them to oblige others, who are otherwise persuaded, to abide by them too, on the peril of wanting the good things these churches and church governors have to bestow; and, if this is the case, I do not see why protestant church-governors, as well as others, should not be infallible.

But, after all, is it a fact to be depended upon, that "all governors of protestant churches have always thought the doctrines of "their established confessions to be right?" Has the learned professor never heard of any of them, who have held, written, or taught any thing contrary to the doctrine of the confession of his own particular church? If he has not, has it not struck him with surprise, that so many men should have arisen, in different

parts of Europe, for two hundred years successively, with intellects so exactly fitted to their respective confessions, as if both had been shaped together, like the coat and the lining, by the same stroke of the shears? But if he has heard (as who has not?) of dissentients among the governors of protestant churches, and those in no small numbers, was it fair in him to build so much upon the contrary supposition?

But I can forgive the learned professor any thing, even this spice of controversial artifice, in consideration of his sending his readers to Mr. *Locke's* first letter on *Toleration*, and to the dedication to Pope *Clement* XI. prefixed to Sir *Richard Steele's Account of the State of the Roman Catholic Religion*, in all parts of the world. Whoever reads those two excellent tracts, with attention and understanding, will never be the worse for reading this *Vindication.*

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

THE author of the following performance freely confesses himself to be one of those, who, in common with an eminent prelate, "have "been seized with that epidemical malady of "*idle* and *visionary* men, THE PROJECTING "TO REFORM THE PUBLIC."* Nor would he have any reason to be ashamed of classing with so conspicuous a character, were it not that he hath unhappily taken an antipathy to that course of medicine, to which so many others of the fraternity owe the recovery of their *health* and *senses*. He is still, alas! labouring to bring his project to bear, even when all the world about him is exclaiming at the folly of every one who is engaged in so desperate an enterprize.

The honest truth is, he thinks the remedy worse than the disease; having seldom observed any one of these patients perfectly cured, but by the application of a charm, which usually operates in the other extreme; and, in the

* See, the *first* Dedication prefixed to the second volume of *The Divine Legation of Moses, &c.* published 1758, p. 5.

shape of political spectacles, represents the public as *too good to need reformation;* a sort of vision, which, of course, ends in a perfect conformity to the principles and manners in fashion, and not seldom puts the *restored fanatic* in a hopeful way of recovering with advantage, whatever he was in danger of losing, by persisting in his former *rèverie.*

Our sage advisers will, no doubt, suggest, that there is a middle way between the two extremes; and that a man of prudence and probity, having tried his talent at reforming without success, may well sit down contented, enjoy his own opinion, and practise his own virtue in some corner, out of the way of temptation, and, for the rest, leave others, who are willing to take the public as they find it, to make their best of it.

To this sober counsel, I, for my own part, should have the less objection, could I be satisfied, that a neutral character in matters concerning public reformation, where talents are vouchsafed though ever so sparingly, were to be justified; and particularly where, as in this country, every man may, within decent restrictions, publish, as well as enjoy, his own opinion.

There are certain provinces and stations, where, if the public really wants to be reformed, they who occupy them must be at some trouble in stifling their own convictions, before they can lie down peaceably in the repose of a neutrality. To many of these provinces belong considerable degrees of influence and authority, sufficient to give weight and success to seasonable and spirited remonstrances;

and they who are in the lowest stations of watchmen and labourers, may bear their testimony, perhaps with more advantage than may be apprehended by those, who consider not, from whom we are to look for the *increase* of what is *planted* or *watered* by *any* hand. And wherever the obligation exists, I should think it can hardly be removed out of view, without opening the prospect of some discomfort, at that awful period when every man's final account shall be called for.

But, indeed, indolent neutrality is not a common, and hardly a possible, effect of the cure performed upon *idle* and *visionary* reformers of the public. Idleness, in the proper sense of the term, is not their failing. They are commonly persons of active and lively spirits, who are not easy under want of employment. Their inexperience leads them into sanguine hopes, that fame, honours, and rewards must crown their labours. It is inconceivable to them, that, where the public is so grossly and notoriously wrong, it should not acknowledge its obligations to those, who interest themselves to set it right, by the most substantial instances of its gratitude. And this is the idle part of the character, in the figurative sense.

But when the astonished visionary finds his mistake, and perceives that public error, of the most palpable kind, has its champions ready armed at all points, and prepared to dispute every inch of ground with him,——that nothing would be got by the unequal conflict but disgrace, contempt, and poverty; human nature, and an impatience to be figuring with

eclat, commonly bring him over, without much hesitation, to the surer side; where he sets himself to act the part of a true proselyte, that is to say, to *reform backwards*, with a violence and precipitation proportioned to the suspicions his new allies might entertain of his hankering after his old deviations, should he not give the most spirited proofs of his effectual conversion.

Were not the subject of too serious a nature, (for the particulars above are to be understood of reformation, and reformers of religious matters), and were not the *dramatis personæ* of too solemn a cast to be exhibited in comedy, one might give very diverting instances of this kind of frailty, in more than one of those who have not only affected, with a kind of philosophical grimace, to ridicule their own former conduct as idle and visionary, but also, to fill up the measure of their merit with their party, have been the forwardest to expose, reprobate, and, to the utmost of their good-will, persecute those who persist in this epidemical folly.

The persisters, indeed, are but few; and no wonder. All their discouragements considered, they may be said, like *Abraham*, *against hope, to believe in hope.* In the first ranks of their adversaries appear those who enjoy plentiful emoluments from the nature and construction of the establishment, who are therefore concerned to defend every thing belonging to it, not because it is true, or reasonable, or righteous in itself, or with respect to the design of the gospel, but because *it is established.* With litigants of this complexion, arguments drawn

from reason, from scripture, from the most notorious facts, are of no force. When particular answers fail them, they have general ones at hand, which do their business effectually. Public authority, long possession, the concurrence of the majority, the danger to public peace from attempts to innovate, &c. &c. &c. have such a formidable appearance, even in the eyes of some of the warmest friends of reformation, that they will often shudder at the temerity of their own champions, when they consider with whom and with what they are to engage, and (such are the effects of this kind of intimidation) will suppress their own speculations, to avoid suspicions of being connected with a set of men, whom the nature and tenor of such answers go near to stigmatize with something more heinous than faction and sedition,

The whole case is set forth by Mr. Bayle in so masterly a manner, that I cannot resist the temptation of giving a pretty long extract from him, without any fear however of disgusting the sensible reader with the prolixity of it, for which the justice of that great man's sentiments upon so interesting a subject will make him ample amends, as well as furnish me with some reflections arising from the case as stated by Bayle, compared with the conduct of the anti-reformers in our own country.

John de Launoi, a Parisian doctor of the *Sorbonne*, having, in the course of his learned disquisitions, found out the falsehood of many legends and traditions concerning the saints who were honoured with places in the popish calendars, made no scruple to publish his dis-

coveries, and, in consequence of them, to propose, that these imaginary beings might be expunged from those calendars, martyrologies, &c. as occasioning an highly criminal superstition in those who paid religious adoration to them. He even ventured to attack the angelic doctor *Aquinas*, as chargeable with great ignorance, or great insincerity, in building his arguments against heterodoxy upon fabulous traditions.

One *Baron*, a jacobine friar, undertook the defence of *Aquinas*, maintaining, that " the " traditions he built upon had been derived " from primitive times; that *Launoi's* re- " searches and conclusions were the employ- " ment of a pragmatical genius, more con- " cerned to obtain a great than a good name; " that Launoi ought, like St. Thomas, to " have let things alone, when they were well; " and that, admitting some of these traditions " were of a doubtful authority, or even fabu- " lous, Launoi should have paid a proper re- " gard to that maxim of the physicians, *Ma- " lum bene positum ne moveto.*" Which, being transferred into divinity, signifies, that *false traditions, which do not hurt faith, and promote piety, ought to be retained, and not disturbed.* Upon which Mr. Bayle thus reasons:

" If all the circumstances set forth by this " *Jacobine* were true, there is no doubt but " *John de Launoi* was deservedly condemned, " as one who, to make himself talked of, and " to satisfy his ill nature, would oppose many " general opinions, which had obtained time " out of mind, to the advancement of piety, " without detriment to the faith.

——" But this is not the case of our Sor-
" bonne doctor. The traditions he opposes
" have no good title, and his arguments against
" them are unanswerable. Now, in this case,
" it is plain, there is all the right in the world
" to bring the most general and ancient opi-
" nions to a trial, especially when their falsity
" keeps up a criminal devotion.

" I desire it may be observed, that the rea-
" sonings of this doctor were of such force,
" as to undeceive abundance of people;
" but yet the abuses have not been removed.
" Things remain upon the same foot in *Pro-*
" *vence*,* and elsewhere. They tell you still
" the same stories they told your ancestors,
" and you see the same worship and the same
" ceremonies. This proves the difference
" there is betwixt private persons and the pub-
" lic. Particular people are most of them,
" one time or other, undeceived; and yet the
" practice of the public remains the same."

After which Mr. Bayle brings some parallel instances from Cicero and Juvenal, to shew, that public institutions in the Roman state, kept their ground against the conviction even of a majority. And then goes on thus:

" There is no likelihood that they who fol-
" low the steps of *John de Launoi* can do any
" service, whilst things are only carried on
" by way of literary dispute. The patrons of
" false devotion will never recede. They find
" their account too much in not bating an

* Where a fictitious Mary Magdalen is worshiped as the converter of the country. See Le Vassor's *History of Louis* xiii. tom. iv. part 2, p. 509. It is book xix. p. 569, of the edition of 1751.

" ace, and they are powerful enough to secure " themselves from any violence. The court " of Rome will second and support them. The " Romish church seems to have adopted the " religion of the god TERMINUS of the Roman " republic. This god never yielded a tittle, " no not to Jupiter himself; which was a " sign, said they, that the Roman people should " never recede, nor yield an inch of ground " to their enemies. If any pope should be " willing to sacrifice something to the re-union " of the schismatics, some insignificant devo- " tions, some superannuated traditions, he " might apprehend as great a murmur against " him, as the heathens made against the scan- " dalous peace of the emperor Jovian."

He then proceeds to give some modern instances of the bad success of reformers.—Of the Jesuit *Papebroch*, and his assistants, "who " attempted to purge the *Acta Sanctorum* of " many fabulous and scandalous particulars, " for which service the Carmelites and other " monks procured several volumes of the said " acts, so purged, to be burned by the inqui- " sition of Toledo."——Of Father *Mabillon*, who "having laid down some very good rules " concerning the worship of some saints, and " the judgment to be made of relics;—was " answered, *physician heal thyself*;—reform " first the worship paid in some houses of " your order of St. Benedict to saints as dubi- " ous as any. He was likewise told of the in- " jury he did the church, and the advantage " he gave to protestants."—Lastly, of Mr. Thiers, who " set up against false relics,—ex- " amined where the bodies of martyrs lay,—

" published some dissertations upon the *holy* " *tear* of *Vendôme*, and upon St. *Firmin*.— " All, says Mr. Bayle, was lost labour. The " King's council suppressed his book about " St. *Firmin*, as the bishop of Amiens had " condemned a letter he had published upon " the same question."

Mr. Bayle's concluding reflection is as follows: " The fruits of a discreet zeal are de- " stroyed in the bud. They build upon this " principle, that it is dangerous to abrogate " old customs; that boundaries ought not to " be removed; and that, according to the old " proverb, we should *leave the minster where* " *we find it.* The prosperity of the christian " Rome, just like that of the pagan Rome, is " founded upon the preservation of ancient " rights. Consecrations must be complied " with; religion will allow no alteration in " them, *sed illa mutari vetat religio, et con-* " *secratis utendum est.*" *In our days* said a sub-prior of St. *Anthony*, let us beware of innovations.*

We see then how it is: How numerous, how well disciplined the forces that are brought into the field against reformers; how able the generals that head them, and how determined the whole body not to yield an inch, even to the united powers of piety, truth, and common sense!

But, methinks, I hear a zealous anti-reformer, steady to his point, and not easily disconcerted, expostulating with me to the following effect:

* Bayle's Dict. Art. LAUNOI (JOHN DE) Rem. Q.

" We see, indeed, from this representation " of Mr. Bayle, *how it is;* but only, *how it is* " in popish countries. Do not protestant " churches reprobate saint-worship of all sorts? " Have we any such instances among us of " gross idolatry, as that of worshiping an " imaginary saint? And can you pretend, " there are any errors or corruptions in the " church of England, any thing like to have " so ill an effect upon the people, as the shame- " ful superstitions attacked by the French re- " formers above-mentioned? On another " hand, is it fair to put the reformed churches, " and particularly the church of England, " which pretend to no infallibility, and which " are founded upon principles of christian li- " berty, upon the same footing of obstinacy " with the church of Rome, the very genius " and spirit of which excludes all examina- " tion, and all right of private judgment? " And is it not upon record, that the church " of England hath made alterations in her " public forms, and doth she not declare that " she is ready to make them again, upon just " and weighty occasions?"

To the first part of this remonstrance I answer, that neither *Launoi*, *Papebroch*, *Mabillon*, nor *Thiers*, made the least question about the lawfulness of worshiping those whom they esteemed to be real saints, or venerating what could be proved to be true relics. They saw not the least idolatry or superstition in either practice. And, it being pre-supposed by them, that saint-worship was both lawful and edifying, I apprehend, it would not be of much

significance, with respect either to the piety or moral principles of the people, that they were under the delusion which these reformers endeavoured to remove. Mr. Bayle, indeed, calls it a criminal devotion ; but, upon principles which he hath well explained elsewhere, it could not be criminal in the party who intended his worship to a real saint.* If a French papist was persuaded that his prayers to St. *Firmin* or St. *Renatus* were as properly directed as those he made to St. *Peter* or St. *Paul*, his inward spirit of devotion would be no less zealous and sincere in the one case than in the other ; nor would the merit of it suffer any diminution on account of a mistake of which he was not, nor could be made, sensible. And this is the circumstance which gives all its worth to Father Baron's maxim, *Malum bene positum ne moveto.*

The case, indeed, is different, when you ascend from the common people to their governors and directors, who were conscious of the delusion, and still kept it up, or who were capable judges of Launoi's reasonings, and refused to examine them. But even here it would be difficult, perhaps, to state the comparative guilt of popish and protestant rulers in the like circumstances, within their respective departments; and the whole (as it seems to me at least) would turn upon the true answer to this single question, whether certain particulars, which are *equally* proved to want refor-

* See his *Comment Philosoph.* sur ces paroles de J. Christ, *Contrains les d'entrer* Part II. chap. viii. where he undertakes to prove, *que la conscience qui est dans l'erreur, a les mêmes droits que celle qui n'y est pas.*

mation among protestants, have not as ill an effect upon a protestant people, while they continue unreformed, as the mistake of a false saint for a true one has upon a papist, who believes saint-worship to be an indispensable duty? I forbear to give instances, though there are more than one at hand.

With respect to the second member of the expostulation above, I would beg leave to observe, that Mr. *Bayle's* speculations are founded upon the nature and genius of religious establishments in general. Nor can the church of England take it amiss to be ranked with the church of Rome, nor the church of Rome to be ranked with a Pagan establishment, so far as the parallel really and in fact will hold. To me there does not appear one consideration which impeached the prudence, or obstructed the success, of *Launoi*, *Mabillon*, or *Thiers*, that would not operate equally to the disreputation and disappointment of an English protestant reformer. In all exclusive establishments, where temporal emoluments are annexed to the profession of a certain system of doctrines, and the usage of a certain routine of forms, and appropriated to an order of men so and so qualified, that order of men will naturally think themselves interested that things should continue as they are. A reformation might endanger their emoluments. For though it should only begin with such things as are most notoriously amiss, the alteration of which would no way affect their temporal interests, yet, by opening a door to farther enquiry (which would be the natural effect of it,) their

dignities and revenues might possibly be brought into question, and be thought to need some regulations, which it can hardly be supposed they would approve. So that they who ask, *who knows where a reformation may end?* by way of giving a reason why it should not be begun, are certainly not *unwise in their generation.* A man of sense, though he may love his money better than any thing else, may, nevertheless, be capable of discerning the particulars where a reformation is wanted.

For the rest, the clergy of protestant establishments have been protected in their opposition to innovations by the higher powers, as well as *monks* and *augurs.* The commonalty in our own country, as far as ever I could see, are kept in their prejudices and adherence to their present forms, by the same considerations and ways of arguing that attach the vulgar in other countries to things of a worse complexion.* We have an example in the renowned

* See bishop Beverege's latin sermon before the convocation, 1689, and most of the sermons at Hutchins's lectures.

Rem. Q. at the end. Mr. Bayle refers to the preface to the new editions of the Jesuite's catechism by Stephen Pasquier; which my copy, which is of Delft, 1717, has not. But the story is told in chap. viii. book 1. of the Confession Catholique, du Sieur de Sancy, p. 197,198, of the Cologne edition, 1720, thus: "Telles gens que vous, furent ces beaux eveſques du Lionnois, qui "assemblerent un sinode pour reformer la coustume de St. Antoine "de ce pais la: les religieux du lieu s'appellent, pourceaux de St. "Antoine par humilité; ils sont obligés de faire huit repas, comme "monstrant la fragilité du genre humain. Il y eut quelques jesuites, "freres mineurs, et quelques jeunes eveſques, qui firent des belles et "longues harangues, pour monstrer que telles constitutions peuvent "changer, *habita ratione temporum.* Et que ce que nos peres avoient fait a bonne intention, estoit aujourd'huy, ridicule. Mais "a toutes ces raisons le soussprieur de St. Antoine, qui ronsloit, ne

Tillotson, what murmurs the presiding character in our church experienced, upon giving way to a reformation of our public forms and services, though in the least important particulars. The arguments against a reform, taken from possession and antiquity, and the expedience of adhering to ancient rights, have been as often and as warmly urged by some protestants in England, as by the orthodox in foreign lands. How dextrous we are at recrimination, the late Mr. White's *Letters to a Dissenting Gentleman* remain a memorable and standing evidence. Father Mabillon himself could not hear more of the advantage he gave to protestants, than the authors of the *Free and candid Disquisitions* have been told of the countenance they gave to the English protestant dissenters.* And I am not certain that

" respondit qu'une grave sentence et remarquable; *en nos jours, " gardons nous des novalitez.* On recommenca de plus belle con- " tre les mocqueurs de ce siecle, comme vous autres, et ce souſprieur " a quatre mentons commenca, gar, gar, gar, gar, gardons nous, &c." The latin sentence, *sed illa mutari*, &c. is from Quintilian. And Mr. Du chat hath quoted a passage from Erasmus de ratione concionandi. l. 2. in his note upon the Sub prior's maxim, to the same purpose. Vacare sacris literis, aut ad synceriorem pietatem aspirare nec licet, si forsalicui liberet. Mox audiunt, utere consuetis, si vis esse Benedictinus.

* " This book of yours [The Free and Candid Disquisitions] " will be a means to lessen very much the credit and estimation of " the church of England in the eyes of many of its members, as " well as to confirm and encourage the dissenters in their present " ways, perhaps also to increase the number of them.—Your Dis- " quisitions, doubtless, will be considered as a grand arsenal, stored " with ordnance of almost all sorts, fit to attack the church of Eng- " land, which our adversaries, no doubt, will thank you for, and " have recourse to, upon all occasions." *Free and impartial considerations on the Free and candid Disquisitions: ascribed to Mr. White*, p. 59, 60.

he would be mistaken, who should affirm of some who would be thought pillars of the church of England (what Luther did of his Romish adversaries*) that the remonstrances of these disquisitors have rendered them more tenacious and inflexible, even with respect to some particulars which seemed to be given up on all hands, till they were pointed out for reformation by these *idle* and *visionary* men.†

To what the alterations that have been made in our ecclesiastical system amount, and consequently how far the church may be disposed to a farther reformation upon just and weighty occasions, will be seen by and by.

Here is more than sufficient, one would think, to deter a reformer, who is able and deliberate enough to *count the cost*, from ever meddling with public error, even with more than half the courage of Luther. A man must be in a very uncommon situation, as well as of an uncommon spirit, even in this land of liberty, who is bold enough to undertake the patronage of a cause, to which so many, at different periods, have fallen martyrs. Not always, indeed, by fire and sword, but oftener, perhaps, by what kills as surely, though not so quickly, hunger and nakedness.

For the misfortune is, that the malady of reforming the public, is most apt to seize upon

* Verum concordiam fidei, seu doctrinæ, frustra quærit Erasmus, eo consilio ut mutuum cedamus et condonemus, non tantum quod adversarii prorsus nihil cedunt, nec cedere volunt, quin potius rigidius et obstinatius nunc omnia defendunt quam unquam antea, etiam talia ausi nunc exigere, quæ ante Lutherum ipsimet damnaverant, et reprobaverant. Luther apud Seckendorf, lib. iii. p. 53.

† See Occasional Remarks upon some late Strictures on *The Confessional*, Part ii. p. 37—50.

those, whose profession leads them to a more intimate study of the holy scriptures ; whose views in life, and ordinarily, whose scanty circumstances require, that they should preserve some credit with their ecclesiastical superiors, in order to procure themselves a decent maintenance. Nothing can be more fatal to such, than a mutinous spirit of reformation. They are marked of course as *forbidden* and *contraband* men. A sprightly academic was one day making some free observations upon the canons, before an eminent sage of the law: "Be-"ware, young man," says the prudent counsellor, "of the *holy office*, and remember that "there are *starving*, as well as *burning* inqui-"sitions."

But, after all, they who can get above these alarming considerations, or who are in a situation not to be affected by them, will not be absolutely destitute of some gleams of hope and comfort, over and besides what results from the inward testimony of having done their duty.

Mr. Bayle, as the reader hath seen, observed, that "the reasonings of Dr. Launoi had force "enough to convince abundance of people," and those of course, people of the best sense, and the most rational piety. So, no doubt, hath it happened to the pleaders for a farther reformation in our own church, many of whom have been not a whit behind the Sorbonne doctor, either in the evidence of facts, or in the force of their reasoning. Nor is it unreasonable to presume, that, as farther developements are made, the number of the *convinced* must be increased.

The weakness of the few answers that have been made to the important remonstrances of serious and judicious men on the article of a farther reformation, and the supercilious contempt with which the most respectful as well as the most reasonable of them have been passed by, must detract something from the estimation of those whom the thinking part of mankind will suppose to be chiefly concerned to take notice of them. It will look like a combination to adhere to the established system, for some political purposes not fit to be owned; while no solicitude is perceived to relieve the reasonable scruples of conscientious dissenters, or to consult the real necessities of our own people, by substituting, in the room of hackneyed, and not always justifiable forms, more intelligible as well as more animating methods of public worship, and public edification.

To be plainer still; this temper and conduct in a set of men, many of whom make it appear, on other occasions, that they want neither learning nor capacity to form an accurate judgment on so interesting a case, will hardly allow us to think them in earnest in their weekly exhortations to christian piety and virtue, or the zeal they occasionally express for the protestant religion and government. Their doctrine, contrasted by their practice, will look to the discerning part of the public, as if nothing was meant by these terms, in *their* mouths, but mere conformity to an ecclesiastical establishment, and a resolution to support and defend that at all events, with, or without reason.

But, if ever the mask should fall off in some future skirmish * (the probable and frequent effect of a rivalship for temporal honours and emoluments), and one of the parties should be reduced to the necessity of leaning upon the friends of reformation, by way of balance to the other, it is then that the labours of these idle and visionary men may come to have their weight; and some of those, at least, who are now pining away in a desponding obscurity, under the frowns of their disobliged superiors, may possibly live to see the way they have been preparing, gradually opening to the accomplishment of what all well-informed christians, and consistent protestants, have been so long and so ardently wishing for in vain.

But let this happen when it will, the church will not get half so much credit by a reformation into which she is compelled by an unwelcome necessity, as would attend her undertaking it freely and of her own bounty; and there is one consideration above all others, in which

* This was once very near being the case, when, in the memorable year 1745, two of our leading churchmen could not agree, whether, upon the received system of divinity, the rebellion then on foot was to be considered as a judgment upon the state, or only upon particulars. The difference, however, was happily compromised in the following manner.—"In the mean time, most polemic Sir, let us "agree in this, however different we may go in other matters, TO "REVERENCE AND SUPPORT OUR HAPPY CONSTITUTI-"ON. And, that I may bring the matter as near to you [might he "not have added, and to myself?] as I can, what *other* constitution "but this, let me ask you, would have heaped *chancellorships*, *arch-*"*deaconries*, *prebends*, &c. with so liberal a hand, and on so worthy "a subject?"—This was an argument *ad utrumque*, which would admit of no demur; and so, we may suppose, they shook hands, and parted friends.

her honour is intimately concerned, that should dispose her to think of it seriously.

It is an objection which, by turns, has been made to all the reformed establishments in Europe, that their respective plans are too narrow and circumscribed; nor is it to be denied, that, along with all their professions of asserting christian liberty, they have, more or less, imposed upon their members certain doctrines and modes of worship, for which they have no other than human authority.

When this is objected to any of them, as inconsistent with their original foundation, the holy scriptures, they constantly appeal to the practice of each other, as a common justification of them all; as if that were sufficient to preclude all appeals to any other authority.

The learned and excellent Dr. Mosheim hath complimented the church of England with the title of, *the chief and leading branch of that great community, which goes under the denomination of the* REFORMED CHURCH. *

* That is, according to Dr. Maclaine's Translation, vol. ii. p. 575. quarto edition. Mosheim's words are, *Anglicana Ecclesia, quæ nunc princeps est Reformatorum.* The compliment in the English is a little strained. Mosheim, by the word *princeps*, meant only, *the most considerable.* He could not represent the church of England under the idea of a leader of the non-episcopal churches. *Princeps*, in good latin authors, often signifies, the first in order of time. [See Dr. Jortin's Life of Erasmus, vol. i. p. 552.] But that sense is excluded by the words *nunc est*, neither is it true that the church of England was the *first* church that was reformed. It is just enough to say, she *is* the *most considerable.* Mosheim's History is a valuable acquisition to the christian as well as the literary commonwealth, and is well worth the perusal of those who would not be deluded by the false and fallacious views in which the conduct of churchmen, both with respect to facts and systems, has been placed by former historians. Dr. Maclaine's translation and notes have, *in general*, great merit.

What prescriptive or equitable right the church of England has to this preference, I shall not stay to enquire. It is sufficient for my purpose that she accepts the compliment, having, indeed, paid it to herself an hundred times.* And yet, when her own unscriptural impositions come to be objected to her, she hath the condescension to alledge in her defence, the usages of protestant churches abroad; nay, hath sometimes been humble enough to take shelter under the practice of the dissenting churches at home, — those very assemblies, which, on other occasions, she hath refused to acknowledge as sister-churches; a degree of humility, in my poor opinion, much below the dignity of a leading church, which surely should maintain her ground, and vindicate her practice by original authority, without accepting any supplemental aid from the examples of those, whom, in every other light, she looks upon as something less than her inferiors.

But, would the church of England, indeed, perfectly atchieve this honour of being the lea-

* "We think," says a learned bishop, "our own church the "best; every body thinks it far from the worst."—"The Luthe-"rans," says another (if another), "prefer it to the Calvinist com-"munion, the Calvinists to the Lutheran, and the Greeks to both." —Which is explained to mean, that every one thinks the church of England the next best to his own. "But this," says Dr. Mahew, "is said without proof." *Second Defence*, p. 6.—And mark what a *bitter pill* the doctor gives us in the room of this *sweetmeat*, with which we treat ourselves. "There is indeed," says he, "*one* church, "a very ancient and extensive one, which it may naturally be con-"cluded, for a reason that shall be nameless, considers the commu-"nion of the church of England the next best to her own." *Observ.* p. 127. For my part, I should think we are well off, if, for this *nameless* reason, all other protestants do not think our church the *worst* but one.

der and chief of all reformed churches? The way is open. Let her be the *first* to remove every stumbling-block out of the way of her weak (if so she will needs call them) but conscientious fellow-christians. Let her nobly and generously abolish and disavow all impositions, all bonds, and yokes, all beggarly elements, disagreeable to the spirit and design of christianity. Let her remove all grounds of suspicion of her hankering after Romish superstition, by renouncing every rite, ordinance, and ceremony, which may nourish this jealousy among the dissenters, and for which she is driven to make apologies, that so remarkably contrast her pretensions to an authority to decree them.* Let her do this, and set the glorious example to the other protestant churches of Europe, and then will she be justly entitled to those encomiums, which, while she assumes them in her present situation, will only pass with the judicious for the meanest of all mean things, self-adulation.

But to wave our speculations for the present, and to come to a few plain facts. Let us take a cursory view of the steps taken, by authority, to reform the church of England, after the settlement of it by Queen Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity.

Elizabeth would enter into no treaty with the old puritans to alter or reform any thing. They were delivered over to Parker and Whitgift, for correction *only;* which the latter exercised with so unfeeling a hand, and so far

† Vid. canon xxx. and the rubrick at the end of the Communion Service.

beyond his legal powers, that, upon the queen's demise, he began to be terribly frighted at the approach of king James's first parliament; and it is probable enough his apprehensions hastened his death.

He lived, however, to be present at the Hampton-Court conference, where all objections were happily silenced by the commodious maxim of, *no bishop, no king*. The whole affair ended with extravagant compliments to the royal moderator, which some people, who were not puritans, thought christian bishops should not have carried so far.

Barlow's account of it might well enough have been called, *a Farce of three Acts, as it was played by his Majesty's Servants at Hampton-Court*, &c. But it proved to be no farce to the poor conscientious puritans, with whom James faithfully kept his promise, viz. that, "if they would not conform, he would *harry* "*them out of the land, and even do worse.*"* Accordingly many of these worthy confessors found it more eligible to quit their country, and to seek their peace in an uncultivated desart, than abide the fury of the bishops. And when they, who first fled to New England, had made this a comfortable asylum, the authority of government was most cruelly interposed, to deprive those, who would have followed their brethren, of this relief, that the bishops might not lose the satisfaction of tormenting them at home. † And afterwards,

* Fuller's church hiſt. B. x. p. 19, and Heylin's hiſtory of the preſbyterians, B. xi. p. 376.

† See Tindal's Rapin, 8vo. 1731, vol. IX. p. 312—395. Macaulay, vol. I. p. 67. But above all, Wilſon, p. 74.

when, in the reign of Charles I. these refugees began to be happy and prosperous, the malicious Laud, that they might reap no advantages from their industry, commercial genius, and christian liberty, contrived to cramp their trade by foolish proclamations,* and, to complete their mortification, was upon the point of sending them a bishop with a military force to back his authority, if the Scots had not found him other business.†

Fuller tells us, humourously enough, that, after the Hampton Court conference, "many "cripples in conformity were cured of their "halting therein, and such as knew not their "own, till they knew the king's mind in this "matter, for the future quietly digesting the "ceremonies of the church."‡

It is more than probable, that James himself was one of these cripples, till he talked with his bishops; the time had been, when he could no more digest these ceremonies, than his new puritan subjects, and when he talked against those of the church of England, in particular, with scorn and contempt.‖

No doubt but, upon the event of this conference, there was a considerable *falling off*. So it will always be in such cases, even with those who *know their own minds* well enough. Bancroft pretended to Spotswood, Archbishop of St. Andrews, that, "when the rolls were

* Rushworth, second part, p. 718.

† Heylin's Life of Laud. p. 369.

‡ Fuller's Church History, B. x. p. 21.

‖ He called the English liturgy, "an evil said mass in English; "which wanted nothing of the mass but the liftings." Calderwood, apud Harris, p. 25.

" called of those who stood out, and were de-
" posed, which was some years after, they
" were found to be *forty-nine* in all England,
" whereas the ministers in that kingdom are
" reckoned nine thousand and above."*

Bancroft probably forgot to tell his brother Spotswood, how many shiploads he had terrified into foreign countries.† It might be too, that he found no more than *forty-nine*, whom he held it safe to persecute; poor, friendless, and moneyless men, who had nothing wherewithal to buy off their censures, nor any patrons to protect them. There are authentic accounts, that the non-conformist ministers were not so thin sown even in Bancroft's reign.

But perhaps a little anecdote, preserved by a sensible and candid conformist, may help us to account for this gross misrepresentation. " In the year 1669, says he, we had several
" articles sent down to the clergy, with pri-
" vate orders to some, to make the conventi-
" clers as few and inconsiderable as might be.
" The eighth and last was this, *whether you do*
" *think they might be easily suppressed by the*
" *assistance of the civil magistrate?*"‡

This was a cast of Sheldon's politics, the system of which he took from that excellent original, Bancroft!‖ It would not have looked well to the civil magistrate to do the *hierar-*

* Spotswood's Hist. of the Church of Scotland, p. 479, and Heylin's Hist. of the Presbyt. p. 376. Calderwood says, that the number of silenced and deprived ministers, on that occasion, were 300. *Altare Damascenum*, Præfat.

† See Occasional Remarks, Part II. p. 91—93.

‡ Conformists plea for Non-conformists, Part I. p. 40.

‖ See Pierce's Vindic. p. 169, 170.

chical drudgery of the prelates, while the nonconformists were esteemed considerable for their numbers and quality. Even Charles's ministers might have boggled at this.

But Spotswood's reflection upon Bancroft's report, must not be forgot. "Such a noise, "says he, will a few disturbers make, in any so- "ciety where they are tolerated." Experience hath shewn, that the more such disturbers are tolerated, the less noise they make. But Spotswood, by the word *tolerated*, meant, *suffered to live*. Nothing like a halter to make a man cease his noise!

What the puritans aimed at, and hoped to obtain by this conference, may be seen in that excellent rescript called the *millenary petition*, preserved by Fuller (no bad model for a reformation even in these days;) what they did obtain, was imprisonment, deposition, and exile.

The violence with which the ruling bishops drove on during this and the first part of the succeeding reign, (over which a good-natured man would throw a cloak, if he could find one large enough to cover it) lost them first their seats in parliament, and afterwards their whole episcopal authority.

Of those great and wise men who composed the parliament of 1641, (and greater, or wiser, or more of them at one time, England never saw)* all were not of one mind, with respect to the bishops.

* "But Cromwell subdued his country when this spirit [of liberty] was at its height, by a successful struggle against court oppres- "sion, and while it was conducted and supported by *a set of the* "*greatest geniuses for government the world ever saw embarked to-* "*gether in one common cause.*" Notes upon *Pope's Essay on man*, edit. 1743, quarto, p. 103.

Some thought that, particular delinquents being punished for examples, the order might remain, with such limitations, as would prevent its being mischievous for the time to come.

With this view, Archbishop Usher drew up his plan of *the reduction of episcopacy;* and would the bishops have contented themselves with the powers reserved to them in that plan, some have supposed they might have saved themselves, and very probably the king.

But they were wiser. They supposed the king was interested in their preservation, and that if ever the crown should recover the prerogative claimed by James I. and Charles I. episcopacy must rise again with that, in all its pomp and lustre, and in a condition to bring all those who had or should oppose it, to effectual repentance; and in this, such of the bishops as lived to the year 1662, found they had not been mistaken.

This may be called the second attempt to reform the church of England. Whether it miscarried for having in it too much, or too little episcopacy, would be hard to say.

The third was the Savoy conference, 1661. Charles II. impatient to accomplish his restoration, and having some misgivings, suggested probably by Lord Clarendon, that the nonconforming party might still be strong enough to give him much uneasiness, published a declaration at Breda, * giving the presbyterians

* "In the deep ſenſe of this danger" [of the old ſilencing and dividing work] "I ſet myſelf to try, whether terms of poſſible" [q.

to understand two things, which were never intended to be carried into execution, but upon the extremest compulsion: 1. A new model of the church of England. 2. Where this should fall short of satisfying tender consciences, all possible ease and relief, by a large and comprehensive toleration.

Charles soon found that the dissenters were in no condition to molest him. Nevertheless, as the royal word was given *twice over*, some shew must be made of keeping it. And this produced the Savoy conference so called; a complication of sophistry, hypocrisy, and virulence, on the part of the orthodox, hardly to be paralleled in popish history.

Clarendon, Sheldon, and Morley, were the conductors of the Drama, the two latter true sons of Bancroft and Laud. Clarendon passes with many for a man of integrity, seduced, in this instance, partly by his own prejudices, partly by the artifices of the bishops.

Bishop Burnet puts the inflexibility of Clarendon towards the non-conformists, to the account of his gratitude to the bishops, for the

peaceable] "concord might be obtained. The London ministers "joined. The King greatly encouraged us; *first by his declara-* "*tion at Breda*, and that against debauchery. Next by personal "engaging us in a treaty with the bishops, and his promise that he "would draw them to meet us, if we would come as near them as we "could. Then by his gracious declaration" [concerning ecclesiastical affairs] "and the testimony there given of our loyalty and "moderation. Then by his commission to treat for the alterations "of the liturgy. But the bishops denied the need of any alterati- "ons, and the convocation cast by the King's indulgence; and if- "fued all in the act of Uniformity." Baxter's Life by Sylvester. Appendix, p. 120. See, *Occasional Remarks upon some late Strictures on the Confessional*, Part I. p. 11. 17.

services they did him in the affair of his daughter's marriage with the duke of York.* If this was the case, and if Clarendon was otherwise inclined to moderate and healing measures, more shame for the bishops who required such a requital.

But, upon the supposition that Lord Clarendon had really the least inclination to relax the terms of conformity in favour of the dissenters, he must have been the most disingenuous man that ever lived. For, in the posthumous history of his life, published 1759, he lays it down for a maxim, that, "nothing but "the severest execution of the law, could "ever prevail upon that class of men, to con-"form to government." What could a vindictive prelate of those times have said more?

Be it here noted, that Lord Clarendon wrote this account of his own life at Montpelier, when he could have no temptation to dissemble. Did he then always think so highly of established ecclesiastical forms, as this maxim imports? Certainly not, if we may judge from two of his essays, written likewise at Montpelier, the one, *on the regard due to antiquity*, the other, *on multiplying controversies.* However, if any one chuses to add his lordship to the examples in the last chapter of this work, of great churchmen labouring under invincible prejudices, I have no objection.

Clarendon's removal from the helm made way for a fourth attempt to reform the church of England, in the year 1668, in which the

* Hist. O. T. vol. I. p. 260.

undertakers on the side of the church were sincere and hearty. These undertakers were, judge Hale, bishop Wilkins, Dr. Tillotson, and a few more, with the countenance of the lord keeper Bridgman. Men, one may venture to say, of sufficient abilities and integrity to recommend a plan of church-reformation to any christian government.

"But, says Burnet, what advantage soever "the men of comprehension might have in "any other respect, the majority of the house "of commons was so possessed against them, "that when it was known in a succeeding "session, that a bill was ready to be offered to "the house for that end [drawn by lord chief "justice Hale], a very extraordinary vote "passed, that no bill to that purpose, should "be received."*

How the house of commons came to be so possessed, or perhaps how it came to be known that such a bill was prepared, is fairly accounted for by the following anecdote:

"Bishop Wilkins, who was a candid, inge-"nuous, and open-hearted man, acquainting "bishop Ward [Seth lord bishop of Salisbury] "with the whole matter, hoping to have met "with his concurrence in it, he [Ward] so "bestirred himself, and all his friends, and "made such a party, that nothing could be "done in it."†

This same bishop Ward, "to get his former "errors to be forgot (for he had complied "during the late times, and held in, by taking

* Hift. O. T. vol. I. p. 260.
† Calamy's Abridgment, p. 322.

" the covenant), went into the high notions " of a severe conformity, and became the " most considerable man upon the bench."*

To finish his character: " He was so far in- " censed with some things contained in the " first part of [the learned and truly antipapis- " tical] Dr. Daniel Whitby's Protestant Recon- " ciler, that he obliged him to make a retrac- " tation." Which, if I had room, I would add in the margin, just as it was imposed by this steady, holding-in bishop, as it may serve for a precedent, in case retractations should once more come into fashion. I cannot forbear, however, putting down two of the obnoxious propositions retracted.†

Some faint attempts towards an accommodation with the protestant dissenters, by abating in the terms of conformity, were afterwards made during the reign of Charles II. particularly in the years 1673 and 1674. Popery was then making so formidable a progress, that

* Burnet, u. f. 192.

† 1. *It is not lawful for superiors to impose any thing in the worship of God, that is not antecedently necessary.*

2. *The duty of not offending a weak brother is inconsistent with all human authority of making laws concerning indifferent things.* Qu. Are these propositions *orthodox*, upon the principles of the ALLIANCE, or are they not? See, a short account of Dr. Whitby, p. 6.

But the worthy Doctor lived to see better times, and another sort of a bishop in that see; and in a sermon upon Matth. xii. 7. intituled, *Ritual Observations to give place to charity* (published in 1720 with ten more, and dedicated to bishop Hoadly) may be said in effect to have retracted these retractations. Dr. Whitby found himself obliged to change his opinions on some other subjects, whereof an account was given to the public, in a little piece intituled Dr. Whitby's *Last Thoughts*, with a candour and sincerity of which it is much to be regretted that we have not more examples.

even Morley and Ward were frightened into an appearance, at least, of desiring to make room for the non-conformists in the church, as an accession of strength against the common enemy. Calamy, in his Abridgement of Baxter's history, hath given some particulars, and a sketch of abatements drawn up by Baxter, at the desire of Lord Orrery, in the year 1673.*

Morley's character is highly painted. "The "bishop of Winchester, that it might not seem "to be for nothing that he oft pretended to be "of so peaceable a disposition, furthered an act "only to take off the assent and consent [to "the Book of Common prayer,] and the re-"nunciation of the covenant. But, when "other bishops were against even this shew of "abatement, he told them openly in the house "[of Lords,] that, *had it been but to abate "them a ceremony, he would not have spoken "in it. But he knew they* [the dissenters] "*were bound to the same things still, by other "clauses or obligations, if these were re-"pealed.*"†

* From p. 338. to 343.

† Ibid. p. 340, but more particularly Baxter's Life by Sylvester, part iii. p. 140, 141. Morley, upon some occasions, affected great candour and moderation towards scrupulous non-conformists. He told one of them (Mr. Samuel Sprint) that "he must not philoso-"phize upon the words assent and consent; nor suppose that the par-"liament did by assent mean an act of the understanding, and by "consent an act of the will: for no more was intended, than that "the person so declaring, intended to read the book, adding, that "if he (Sprint) would make the declaration in the words of the act "of Uniformity, and then say that thereby he meant no more than "that he would read the Common Prayer, he would admit him into a "living." Calamy's Account, &c, p. 341. They who drew up the act of Uniformity, 14 Car. II. would hardly have acquiesced in this unphilosophical doctrine. In the year 1663 an attempt was

This is so black and infamous, that I should hardly blame a zealous churchman, who should demur to the competency of the evidence, as coming from a dissenter. There it hath stood however, for above fifty years, uncontradicted, as far as I know, by any one.

In the year 1675 there was a conference, in order to a comprehension, between Dr. Tillotson and Dr. Stillingfleet on the one part, and some dissenting ministers on the other; and matters being brought into a fair way towards a compromise, the bishops Ward and Pearson were to be told in confidence, and upon promise of secresy, by the two Doctors of the establishment, "how far they had gone, and "how fair they were for agreement." The event is related by Dr. Tillotson in a letter to Mr. Baxter, as follows:

"Sir,

"I took the first opportunity, after you

made for a declaration of assent and consent injoined by the act of Uniformity, to the same effect with this explanation of bishop Morley; but was rejected with indignation, as an alteration wherein was neither justice nor prudence. Calamy's Abridgment of Baxter's Life, p. 205. Mr. Olyffe, and the late bishop Hoadly were of the same mind with bishop Morley. And though, perhaps, the bishops of the present day would ask no questions of a candidate, how he understands the assent or consent which he is required to declare, yet, I dare say, they would not allow him to explain his declaration in bishop Morley's sense in so many words. Nor, indeed, do I think that a declaration limited by such an explanation would be legal. This, however, is an instance of what has often been supposed, that the greatest sticklers for conformity have been self-convicted that the forms by which it is enforced are indefensible. Such men as Morley could not but know, that, if the parliament had meant any thing but what they plainly expressed, they might have found words fit for their purpose, without leaving others to find out meanings, which every man of common sense sees their words will no bear.

" were with us, to speak to the bishop of Sa-
" lisbury [Ward,] who promised to keep the
" matter private, and only to acquaint the bi-
" shop of Chester [Pearson] with it, in order
" to a meeting. But, upon some general dis-
" course, I plainly perceived several things
" could not be obtained. However, he pro-
" nised to appoint a time of meeting; but I
" have not heard from him since."—And there ended the treaty. Ward appears to have acted the same part with Tillotson, in 1675, that he did with Wilkins in 1668, only perhaps with a little more hypocrisy.*

The reason why these two bishops, Morley and Ward, pretended to be so often for accommodation, seems to have been, to prevent any meetings being held without their knowledge, and consequently a reformation from coming upon them by surprize. No doubt but Ward kept in mind, not without some degree of horror, how narrowly *Bel and the dragon* had escaped an ambuscade by the freedom and openness of honest bishop Wilkins.

The next attempt to reform the church of England, had not only the concurrence of some worthy bishops who did real honour to their order, and of a number of pious and learned divines in inferior stations, but was undertaken under the auspicious authority of William III. in the year 1689.

By a fatal mistake, it was agreed, that the matter should pass through the forms of convocation, where it met with an effectual defeat from the zeal and activity of a faction in the

* Baxter's life by Sylvester, part iii. p. 157.

lower house, led on indeed, as was suspected, by some of the bench, particularly Mew and Sprat.

Dr. Birch brings some authentic proofs of bishop Compton's intriguing to have Dr. Jane chosen prolocutor, in preference to Tillotson, not out of a disaffection to the cause, but to the man.* But he who could put the cause in so fair a way of being ruined to gratify his own personal resentment, could not be very cordial to it at the bottom.

One single circumstance will serve to characterize the spirit and piety of these convocation-men :

" We, say they, being the representatives of " a formed established church, do not think " fit to mention the word RELIGION, any " further than it is the religion of some formed " established church."

The word for *religion*, in the Greek Testament, is θρησκεια, which is no where appropriated to a formed established church. Paul speaks of sects in the Jewish religion,† some of which were just as much established as the presbyterians and quakers are in England. *James* defines *pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father*,‡ in terms which shew, that such religion may be practised and conformed to, where there neither is, nor ever was, an established church. But this sort of religion the pious convocation-men *did not think fit to mention !*

Their notion of religion, indeed, hath rather

* Life of Tillotson, p. 179.
† Acts xxv. 5.—‡ James i. 27.

a pagan cast. *Religionem, eam, quæ in* METU *et* CÆREMONIA *Deorum sit, appellant, says Cicero.** But another pagan seems to have had a more evangelical idea of religion. Religiosus *est non modo deorum sanctitatem magni æstimans, sed etiam officiosus adversus homines.*†

One cannot well call the *free and candid disquisitions*, relating to the church of England, or the excellent *Appeals* which followed them, by the name of attempts to reform the church. These were rather attempts to feel the pulses of the ruling ecclesiastics of that time. So, however, matters were managed at that period, that neither the authors nor the public were the wiser for those attempts. An ingenious fencer was employed on this occasion, to parry the home thrusts of these reformers, who had the dexterity to handle his weapons so, as to appear in the eyes of the spectators, to part at least on equal terms with his antagonists.

Here then hath TERMINUS fixed his pedestal, and here hath he kept his station for two whole centuries. We are just where the Acts of Uniformity left us, and where, for aught that appears in the temper of the times, the last trumpet will find us,—if popery will please to let us be quiet, and leave us to our repose with the same complaisance, that we have left *her bishops to go about here, and exercise every part of their function without offence, and without observation.*‡

* *De Inventione*, ii. 22.—† *Festus*, in verbo RELIGIOSUS.

‡ In the first edition, the last part of the paragraph stood thus,—"if popery will please to let us be quiet, and leave us to our repose "with the same complaisance, that we have left her to go about and "*perform all her functions, without offence, and without observation.*" Soon after the *Confessional* was published, a pacquet, di-

Having now given a short series of instances of the church of England's disposition to reform

rected to the author, was received through the printer's hands, containing a pamphlet, intituled, *A Review of Dr. Mayhew's Remarks on the Answer to his Observations on the conduct of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, by Last Apthorp, M. A.* printed for *J. Rivington.* With this pamphlet was conveyed an anonymous ticket in these words :—"The author of the "Confessional is desired to read p. 10. 11, 12, of the inclosed "pamphlet ; and then to consider seriously, whether he hath given, "in p. 36, 37, of his preface, a just representation of the words "there quoted."——Upon looking into the preface, the author of the Confessional could find no words quoted at p. xxxvi. which had the least relation to any part of the controversy carried on with the late Dr. Mayhew, concerning the society for the propagation of the gospel, &c. By the *ingenious fencer* there mentioned, the author meant the late Mr. White, who was said to have animadverted on the *Free and Candid Disquisitions*, in a performance quoted above. If any gentleman now living is conscious that the term *ingenious fencer* might be applied to himself, upon account of his parrying the thrusts of the said *Disquisitions*, the author of the Confessional declares he knows no such gentleman, and therefore is not accountable for any offence taken at that expression. In the xxxviith page of the first edition are indeed the words set down in the beginning of this note, alluding to, rather than quoting the passage in question. However, to be ingenuous, the author of the Confessional acknowledges, that he had some words in the *Answer to Dr. Mayhew's Observations*. p. 66. then in his mind, and he now begs leave to consider how far his manner of referring to them may be called a misrepresentation. Upon inspecting Mr. Apthorp's pamphlet, the supposed misrepresentation, it is conjectured, consists in this, viz. that *popery* is put for *popish bishops*, and *all her functions* for *every part of their function*. But the prefacer thinks, that wherever popish bishops are permitted to exercise every part of their function without offence and without observation, it is a very reasonable presumption that there every function of popery is performed with as little resentment or interruption : and among the rest, (if that may be called a function of popery) the making of proselytes. Not so, says Mr. Apthorp, "the answerer evidently means every part of "their *peculiar* function as bishops; confirming the youth, ordai-"ning and visiting the clergy of their own communion; for his ar-"gument led him to speak of nothing else.——Proselytes are "chiefly made by their priests ; and many cannot be made by so

the exceptionable parts of her constitution, I hope I may be indulged in a few remarks upon it.

" few biſhops as they have here." p. 10, 11.——What authority Mr. Apthorp had to interpret the words of Dr. *Mayhew's Anſwerer* in this manner, he knows beſt. But the *Prefacer* is of opinion, that the *Anſwerer* himſelf (who indeed appears by his pamphlet, to be a much abler writer than Mr. Apthorp) would hardly have been ſo weak as to have explained himſelf in this ſort. For, in the firſt place, to ſay as Mr. Apthorp does, that proſelytes are *chiefly* made by popiſh prieſts, is to allow that proſelytes are *not* made by prieſts *only*; and to ſay that *many* proſelytes cannot be made by ſo *few* biſhops as the papiſts have here, is to admit that *ſome* may be made by theſe biſhops in proportion to their numbers: nor is any thing advanced by Mr. Apthorp to ſhew that making proſelytes is more the peculiar buſineſs of prieſts than of biſhops. If making proſelytes is the duty of prieſts, it is the duty of biſhops to ſee that it is diſcharged; to make this an article of inquiry when they viſit their clergy; to encourage thoſe who are diligent and ſucceſsful in the work; and to reprove the indolent and the negligent. (See the little French book, *A new method of confeſſion.*) When popiſh biſhops confirm the youth of their communion, do they confirm no proſelytes among them? Do they confirm proſelytes without knowing them to be ſuch? Have the papiſts a lower opinion of the neceſſity, virtue, or efficacy of confirmation, than they have who make the want of it in new England an argument for ſending biſhops thither? If not, is not the full liberty of confirming proſelytes, one very conſiderable encouragement both to the prieſt and the proſelyte in the making of them? In one word, is it poſſible to conceive how biſhops can exerciſe every part of their function, while the inferior clergy are reſtrained from exerciſing any part of theirs? Mr. Apthorp tells us, " the *Anſwerer's* argument led him to ſpeak " of nothing elſe [beſides every part of their peculiar function as " biſhops; confirming the youth, ordaining and viſiting the clergy " of their own communion]. And, continues he, it is a known " fact, that thoſe things do give no offence either to churchmen or " diſſenters in this kingdom." In my humble opinion, Mr. Apthorp might have been ſurer of this fact, had he ſaid that there are churchmen and diſſenters in the kingdom *known to himſelf*, to whom thoſe things give no offence. The kingdom of England is of large extent; and there may be, and certainly are, in it great numbers both of churchmen and diſſenters, unknown to Mr. Apthorp, to whom thoſe things do give offence. He proceeds, " Whence he

1. The professed motive of those great churchmen who gave way to any movements

(the Answerer of Dr. Mayhew) " concludes, that the same things " done by Protestant bishops would give none in New England." The *same things!* Are then the *same things*, and *no other*, peculiar to the function of a popish and a protestant bishop respectively? Let not this be said, or even supposed. In the Pontifical published at Rome, 1611, p. 57. the following words stand as part of the oath of every bishop at his consecration:—*Hæreticos et rebelles Domino Papæ persequar et impugnabo* The moment this oath is taken, *Persecution of heretics and rebels to the Pope* becomes a part of the peculiar function of a popish bishop. And when it is considered to whom these characters of heretics and rebels to the pope are ascribed by the papists in general, I apprehend, neither our churchmen nor dissenters will think this a token of inoffensiveness in the peculiar function of such bishop. Thanks to the better spirit of our reformers, no such thing is to be found in our office appointed for *the consecration of bishops*. But it is not impossible that something else might be found in it, which would give umbage to the people of New England who dissent from the established church of the mother-country, and which, if a bishop should think himself obliged to support the full discipline of an episcopal church, might carry him somewhat beyond the three articles mentioned by Mr. Apthorp, as peculiar to the function both of a protestant and a popish bishop. Mr. Apthorp, I hope, will excuse me for taking these freedoms with his Review, when he considers, that it has been made the instrument by which somebody or other endeavoured to fix upon the author of the Confessional an imputation of which every honest man would acquit himself if he could. The said author, however, declares that no misrepresentation was intended by him; and to shew this, hath conformed himself, in this third edition, to what the ticket-writer call *a quotation*, by substituting the very words of the *Answer to Dr. Mayhew's Observations*, &c. as they stand in that pamphlet, leaving it to his readers to determine what the author of the Confessional loses, or what the author of the Answer gains, by the alteration. As Mr. Apthorp's Review has been thus thrown in my way, and as it was the last performance which has appeared in the debate with the late excellent Dr. Mayhew, it is not unlikely but it may be esteemed by one side, as decisive of that not unimportant controversy, and that Dr. Mayhew was effectually silenced by it. I imagine, however, that an impartial reader of the particulars above may be of opinion, that

towards a reformation before the revolution, was not, if you will believe them, any conviction in their own minds, that any circumstance of doctrine, discipline, or worship in the established church, was really wrong. It was always asserted, that the church needed no reformation, and only condescended to these mootings, partly to oblige the Non-conformists with a hearing, and partly to convince them by argument, how little their dissent was to be justified: but might not one say with *more* truth,—much oftener to entertain the church's friends with a triumph after a victory preconcerted with the civil powers?

Mr. Apthorp's Review is not wholly impregnable. And as the late Dr. Mayhew may be supposed to have been the best able to give his own reasons for not replying to it, I shall, upon this occasion, subjoin an extract from a letter of the worthy Doctor's, written to a friend in Great Britain (who had suggested to him, that his reply to Mr. Apthorp's pamphlet was expected) dated, *Boston, April* 7, 1766. "In truth, Sir, I was sufficiently weary of that "controversy, as I intimated at the close of my *Second Defence of* "*the Observations*. Not that I thought I had a bad cause to ma- "nage, but because I had written three large pamphlets upon the "point. Accordingly I signified in the last of them, that I should "publish no more upon it, unless something both new and material "should appear on the other side. In the opinion of sundry gentle- "men here, for whose judgment I had much regard, as well as in my "own meaner opinion, there was nothing in Mr. Apthorp's Review, "&c. which deserved that character, or merited a particular re- "ply. Neither, indeed, could I learn, that even the zealots of "the episcopal party here considered it as of any consequence, un- "less it were merely as the last word; an honour, of which I was "not ambi ious. I had little or no hopes of convincing any, who "remained unconvinced after reading my three tracts upon the sub- "ject of the missions; and was not such a salamander as to chuse to "live long in the fire of controversy. Besides, it was so long be- "fore the said Review appeared in these parts, that the subject of "it was become stale; it ceased to engage the attention of either "party here."

The divines, indeed, who were employed under King William's commission, were free enough in acknowledging and characterizing the blemishes in the church of England; at least, if the remaining, though imperfect, accounts of that transaction may be depended upon. And this has been given as a reason, why the original papers relating to it have been so carefully secreted from the public, as hitherto to have escaped the most diligent inquiries after them.*

And this security is, no doubt, one circumstance which hath given fresh courage to the church of England, once more to hold fast her integrity, and to return to her old posture of defence, in *memorials*, *schism-bills*, *alliances*, and other expedients, some of which shew that even Bancroft and Laud would not have been disparaged by learning some particulars of church artifice from more modern masters of conformity.

2. Another thing the foregoing detail will help us to judge of, is the value of an argument supposed to be of great weight towards disculpating our great churchmen in their backwardness to promote a reformation; namely, that this matter is in the option of the civil powers, without whose concurrence (which perhaps might not be obtained) our most dignified clergy could not stir a step.

But here I would ask, what reason the clergy of the present times can have to doubt of the concurrence of the civil powers in the work

* See *a letter to the moſt Rev. the Lord Archbiſhop of Canterbury* (Cornwallis) *on the preſent oppoſition to any further reformation*, p. 21. 8vo. 1774.

of reformation? By looking back to former times, we see the civil powers have always made it a point to oblige and stand by the established clergy in all their perils; and in one instance, actually fell with them for a season. But even then, their days of darkness were but few, in comparison with the prosperity they have enjoyed in the course of two centuries. Since when, we have seen them rise from their *light afflictions* with redoubled vigour and advantage, so remarkably as to be able to check a reformation against the united endeavours of some of their own *false brethren* in the highest stations, and the most sanguine disposition in the Sovereign himself to effect it.

Nor have we the least reason to imagine that their interest with the civil powers has declined to this hour. It is not much above ten years since the public was told by a great churchman, that "things were then come to that pass, "that the state seemed to be in more need of "the support of the clergy, than they of the "state's."* The reasons given for that presumption still subsist in their full force; not to mention some later appearances which seem to tend towards a farther need, in no long time. So that it is to be hoped we shall hear no more of this plea for the inactivity of the ruling clergy, till full proof is given to the world by a fair and open trial, that their sincere and zealous endeavours for a farther reformation are actually controuled by the civil powers.

* View of Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy, 8vo, 1754, p. 5.

3. The last remark I shall make upon the foregoing facts is, that the alterations made in the forms of the church of England, instead of relieving the scruples of conscientious Nonconformists, greatly increased them. The *Savoy-conference* has been compared to the council of *Trent*. Both were the effects of an unwelcome necessity. In both the obnoxious party presided, and gave judgment: and the event of both convinced the remonstrants respectively, how vain a thing it was to contend against the plenitude of church power, and how much wiser they had been in their generation, in dispensing with things as they stood, before these two reforming bodies undertook to review them.

I doubt not but the intelligent reader, who is moderately conversant in English history from the commencement of the present century, will perceive what room is left for pursuing reflections of the same sort through the last sixty years. But, as I may be thought by some to have already exceeded the just bounds of a preface, I shall for the present content myself with a few remarks upon one interesting circumstance in our present establishment, which has not a little employed the speculations of men of the first abilities of all parties.

There is not, perhaps, an instance of a law enacted in a protestant community, which is less defensible in a religious view, than that of the *sacramental test*, enjoined as a qualification for holding civil offices.

In Charles II's reign, which gave birth to it, a man who should have proposed the repeal of

this law, with respect to protestant dissenters, would have passed for a Socinian at the best, perhaps for an Atheist.

In the next reign, the inconveniencies, and possibly the unrighteousness, of it, were seen and felt, even by some of the great churchmen themselves, among whom Sancroft is named for one; and it was not imagined at that time, but that, upon any such deliverance from popery as the revolution, the protestant interest would be relieved from such an incumbrance for all future time.

Perhaps, at that particular juncture, little more was considered among churchmen, than the ill policy of excluding so considerable a body of protestants, who were, to a man, zealous enemies to popery and arbitrary power, from provinces where they might have supported the common cause of public liberty, with the best effect.

But, after Mr. Locke's letters for *Toleration* had appeared, it was presently perceived, though the title of them ran only for toleration, that his arguments concluded against the authority of any christian society to prescribe religious tests or modes of worship, which were not clearly, plainly, and indisputably, agreeable to the scriptures, whether with or without the sanction of the civil magistrate.*

* It is well and truly observed, in the Preface to the last beautiful edition of Mr. Locke's letters concerning Toleration, in quarto, 1765, "that Mr. Locke was not the first writer on this subject; "for that the argument was well understood and published during "the civil war." All, therefore, that is meant by what is said above, is, that the attention of the public as well as the subject was then revived, which may easily be accounted for by the eminence and known abilities of the living author.

The first effect of Mr. Locke's reasoning appeared in a very sensible *protest*, in behalf of the rejected bill for abrogating the sacramental test, in the year 1689.* No more, however, could then be obtained but a bare toleration, or exemption of protestant dissenters from the penalties before laid upon them for holding and frequenting conventicles.

In the reign of Queen Anne, the friends of religious liberty were kept under by church memorials, and other alarms of the church's danger, calculated to inflame the people, which had all the success the party could wish. And no wonder, if it be true what Swift tells us in his history of the four last years of the Queen, "that the whole sacred order was understood to be concerned in the prosecution of Sacheverel."†

But nothing exhibits a more lively picture of the sense and temper of those times, than the several attempts in favour of a law against occasional conformity, related in bishop Burnet's and other histories; which, after three unsuccessful efforts, was at length carried in the year 1711. The game was then in high-church hands, who played it so dextrously, as in the end to win the Schism-bill, and were within an ace of winning something else of infinitely more consequence.

But, providentially for the public, the reign of these politicians was now at an end. They were totally eclipsed by the accession of George I. a pattern to good and righteous men, as

* See this *Protest* in Calamy's Abridgement, p. 440.
† P. 6.

well as to wise and upright sovereigns. Such, however, was the remaining leaven of the former reign, that all that could be effected in favour of christian liberty, and even that after many struggles and violent opposition, was the repeal of the two acts, that against *occasional conformity*, and the other to *prevent the growth of schism*.

Attempts, indeed, were made to relieve the protestant dissenters from the hardships of the Test-act, both in this and the next reign; and perhaps something more ought to have been ventured on those occasions, than the politicians of those times were willing to put to the hazard. What we certainly know is, that these attempts did not miscarry for want of the hearty concurrence of the princes upon the throne.

In the mean time, whatever the political reasons might be for desisting from any farther molestation of the Test-act, it would have been strange, if under the auspicious patronage of a sovereign of the illustrious house of Brunswick, the sons of liberty should have been wanting to their cause, by sitting down in profound silence. The righteousness of Test-laws was now discussed in form, by the accurate bishop Hoadly, and the principles on which they were defended in a religious light, so effectually exposed and disgraced, that even the abilities of the inimitable Sherlock were found unequal to the task of supporting them.

In this state things remained for some time. The eyes of the most prejudiced began to open, and to see the equity of relieving the protestant dissenters from this ignominious distinction; and great hopes were conceived, that in no

long time it would be removed; the rather, as even the conformists themselves were occasionally obliged to comply, not without some reluctance; some of them, I mean, who perhaps never had, nor would have, given the church of England that particular assurance of their being in communion with her, if they had not been called upon by motives in which their respect for her and her institutions had no share.

It may well be supposed, that this was a stroke which the high-church party could not bear with tolerable temper. But what was to be done? The argument was at an end, and personal attacks upon the adversary were to little purpose, who was equally unexceptionable as a writer and as a man, and who was only vulnerable in point of his conformity to a church, whose forms of discipline and government he had shewn, upon gospel-principles, to be liable to so many important objections.

In this distressful hour of despondency, and when things, on the part of the *Test-men* were going on fast towards a state of desperation, arose a champion for the church, who, changing the old posture of defence, undertook to vindicate the Test-law upon the hypothesis of an *Alliance between church and state.*

Two circumstances, indeed, appeared upon the outset of this undertaking, which bore an unpromising aspect towards the learned author's success.

The first was, that the question concerning religious liberty had already passed through the hands of *Milton*, *Locke*, *Hoadly*, *Sherlock*, and other masters of reasoning of the first reputation, which could not but raise some

little prejudice against an undertaker who proposed to strike into a new road. The learned author, moreover, could prevail with himself to say, even after the labours of these great men, that he found the subject in an embroiled condition:* which, however, did not tend to abate the prejudice, more especially when it appeared that, in order to disembroil it, he availed himself of the aid of such writers as *De Marca* and *Bossuet.*†

The other circumstance which incumbered his enterprise, was the author's proposing to support a TEST on such reasoning as would not destroy a TOLERATION;‡ by which it appeared that he meant such a TOLERATION *only* as presupposed the ESTABLISHMENT of a NATIONAL CHURCH,—a *toleration* consisting in an *indulgence* with respect to separate places of worship or different modes of discipline, or in allowances of partial and occasional conformity.

Whereas the toleration contended for by the

* View of Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy, Lett. iv. p. 83.

† Of *De Marca*, bishop Burnet, speaking of the authors from whom he collected materials for the work cited below, says—"The "chief of whom is the late most learned archbishop of Paris *De* "*Marca*, who has written very largely, and with great judgment "and exactness, on this argument. But I cannot commend his "ingenuity so much, as I must do his other excellent qualities; for he "has written very defectively, and has concealed very many "things, to which a man so conversant in all parts of ecclesiastical "learning could not be a stranger." *Preface to bishop Burnet's History of the Rights of Princes in the disposing of ecclesiastical benefices and church lands*, p. 7. *De Marca* wrote a voluminous book of *Alliance*. The ingenuity of Bossuet is more generally known, and may be seen in *Basnage's Hist. de l'Eglise Reformé*, *Wake's Exposition of the Doctrine of the Church of England*, 1687, *and Defence of it*, &c.

‡ View of Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy, Lett. iv. p. 83.

advocates of religious freedom, was "*absolute* "*liberty, just and true liberty, equal and im-* "*partial liberty*, upon the principle that nei- "ther single persons, nor churches, nay nor "even common-wealths, have any just title "to invade the civil rights and worldly goods "of each other, upon pretence of religion."* An attempt to make a *Test-law* consistent with this only true sense of toleration, may be considered in the same light as an attempt to make a thing *heavier than itself*, the want of which secret hath ruined many a hopeful trial at a *perpetual motion.*

For the rest, our learned author's principles are chiefly of the political kind, leading to expedients of civil utility. He was not, however, insensible, that, so far as the church was to contribute her quota to this kind of utility, she must have the authority of the GOSPEL.

Bishop Hoadly, from the circumstance that our Saviour had declared *his kingdom not to be of this world*, had inferred, that "Christ is "himself the sole lawgiver to his subjects, and "himself the sole judge of their behaviour, in "the affairs of conscience and eternal salva- "tion;—that he hath, in those points, left "behind him no visible human authority; no "vicegerents, who can be said properly to "supply his place; no interpreters, upon "whom his subjects are absolutely to depend; "no judges over the consciences or religion "of his people."†

* See the Preface to the Engliſh tranſlation of Locke's firſt letter concerning Toleration, and the letter itſelf, p. 42. of the quarto edition, printed for Millar, 1765.

† Sermon on the *Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Chriſt.*

Hence it followed, that no subjects of Christ's kingdom, under the name or notion of *the church*, could *convene*, as our author expresses it, with the civil magistrate, so, as to give up any points of conscience to his direction; nor could the magistrate accept of such overtures, or such convention, without usurping upon the province which Christ had reserved to himself.

This was immediate death to the theory of *alliance;* nor would the bishop's interpretation of the text admit of any inference in favour of it.

Our learned author, therefore, was under a necessity of finding another interpretation, which would better bear what he had to build upon this text. And here it follows:

"Our Saviour saith, *my kingdom is not of* "*this world;* which bears this plain and ob- "vious sense, that the kingdom of Christ, to "be extended over all mankind, was not, like "the kingdom of God, confined to the Jewish "people, where religion was incorporated "with the state, and therefore *of this world*, "as well in the exercise of it, as in the rewards "and punishments by which it was admini- "stred; but [the kingdom of Christ] was *in* "*dependent of all civil communities*, and there- "fore neither *of this world* as to the exercise "of it, nor as to the rewards and punishments "by which it was administred."*

That a kingdom to be extended over all mankind should not be like a kingdom confined to one particular people, is indeed plain

* Alliance, p. 178.

and obvious enough; but is equally plain and obvious with respect to the Roman as the Jewish kingdom: and why the former should not be pitched upon as the instance put into comparison with Christ's kingdom, especially as the declaration was made to a Roman governor, who might be apprehensive of our Saviour's pretensions to supplant Tiberius, is not quite so obvious. The difference too was the very same in the Roman as in the Jewish kingdom, both as to the exercise of it, and the rewards and punishments by which it was administred. Can any one suppose it to have been our Saviour's intent, on this occasion, to give Pilate an idea of the peculiarities of the Jewish government?

Be that as it may; our learned author's interpretation will even yet bear bishop Hoadly's inferences. Whether it will bear any other, we may see as we go along.

"But, continues our author, whoever imagines that from this independency by institution, the church cannot *convene* and *unite* with the state, concludes much too fast."

Here the *kingdom of Christ* is turned into THE CHURCH, which in this place must mean some particular formed society of Christ's subjects, impowered *a priori* to act for themselves and all the rest, that is, for all mankind. But then, where is *this* church to be met with? A necessary question, which should have been answered before the learned author had stirred a step farther. And now for the reasoning by which this hasty conclusion is obviated:

"We have observed, saith the learned author, that this property in the kingdom of

"Christ, [*viz.* of being *not of this world*] was "given as a mark to distinguish it from the "kingdom of God. That is, it was given to "shew, that this religion extended to all man-"kind, and was not, like the Mosaic, confined "to one only people."

And why not as a mark to distinguish it from *all the rest* of the kingdoms *of this world;* a distinction as certainly intended in our Lord's declaration, as that mentioned by our learned author? The reason is plain. In that case, the kingdom of Christ could have allied with none of the kingdoms of this world, since the moment such alliance should take place, the mark would be extinguished of course; and for this I appeal to the learned author's own interpretation of the text, who makes the property of the kingdom of Christ, of being not of this world, a consequence of its being *independent of all civil communities.* But sink this independency in an union or *alliance* with civil community, and the kingdom of Christ becomes, to all intents and purposes, a kingdom *of this world,* both as to the exercise of it, and as to the rewards and punishments by which it is administred.

This mark of distinction, therefore, was not to appear with respect to any kingdoms of this world, but the Jewish only; and with that there was no danger that the kingdom of Christ should enter into alliance, as it was now upon the point of being broken up.

But the dexterity of our learned author appears to the greatest advantage in the consequence he draws from the foregoing positions:

"CONSEQUENTLY, that very reason which

" made it proper for the Mosaic religion to be " united by divine appointment to the state, " made it fit the christian should"——what? The cast of the argument and the mark of distinction prepared you to expect——— " should not be united to the state." But, no: this would have embroiled the theory of *alliance* with a witness; and therefore happily and seasonably does our learned author turn aside, and conclude———"made it fit that " the christian [religion] should be left free " and independent."

Agreed; free and independent of every legislator, judge, vicegerent, or interpreter, but Christ alone, TO THE END OF TIME.

No: here we part; for the learned author asks, " but to what end, if not for this, to be " at liberty to adapt itself to the many various " civil policies by a suitable union and *alli-* " *ance.*"

And thus we see, not without some degree of surprize, that this very independency of the kingdom of Christ, which distinguished it from all civil communities, as a kingdom *not of this world,* is made an instrument of turning it into as many kingdoms *of this world* as there are *civil policies* among the sons of men.

But to the question, " to what end, if not " for this?"——And is our learned author really in earnest? Can he not perceive one other end for which the christian religion was left free and independent?——an end proclaimed in every page of our christian oracles?——— In one word, the great, the gracious, the generous end of communicating its blessings and benefits to every INDIVIDUAL OF THE HUMAN

RACE, even though he should be connected with, or excluded from, the privileges of every human establishment on the face of the earth.

Let the learned author now try to make *his* end consistent with *this*, to which the scriptures bear so ample and so often-repeated a testimony. We will be reasonable. One single passage of the New Testament, proving that "the christian religion was left free and "independent, that it might be at liberty to "adapt itself to the many various civil poli-"cies, by a suitable union and alliance," will satisfy us. Nay, one single passage from which it may be clearly inferred.* And thus much

* The learned author refers us, indeed, to a prophecy of Isaiah, xlix. 22, 23, which he cites thus: *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the* GENTILES, *and set up my standard to the people—and* KINGS SHALL BE THY NURSING FATHERS, AND THEIR QUEENS THY NURSING MOTHERS. This prophecy, he would have us believe, receives its ultimate completion by the christian religion's "adapting itself to the many "various civil policies, by a suitable union and alliance." Well then, let us see how his completion will turn out. If the kings and queens here mentioned represent the *state*, the party to be *nursed* by them represents the *church* in alliance with them. Now let us go on with the prophecy, for the learned author had left it short. *They* [the *kings* and *queens*, i. e. THE STATE] *shall bow down to thee* [THE CHURCH] *with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet.* If this is to be the ultimate completion of the prophecy, we have reason to be thankful that it hath not yet taken place, and that we have no intimation in the christian scriptures that it ever will, as the prophecy is here interpreted. The learned author hath all along taken it for granted, that church tyranny must be the consequence of the church's being independent on the state, and hath been at some pains to load the protestant assertors of this independency with its invidious papistical consequence; being willingly ignorant, as it should seem, that the independency contended for by the advocates for christian liberty, is not the independency of any visible society, but of individuals only. But, to take the matter at the very worst, what will the state gain by bringing the church into its

surely the learned author owes to his own argument; as many a plain, sincere christian, even after all the pains taken with him in the book of *Alliance*, may, without such additional evidence, be extremely at a loss to conceive, what union or alliance between a kingdom which is, and a kingdom which *is not of this world*, can with any propriety be called *suitable*.

Let us now attend to the upshot: "an alliance then we must conclude the christian "church was at liberty to make, notwithstanding this declared nature of Christ's kingdom. So far is true indeed, that it is debarred from entering into any such *alliance* "with the state, as may admit of any LEGISLATOR in Christ's kingdom but himself: "[that is, a power in the magistrate to alter "doctrines.] But no such power is granted "or usurped by the supremacy of the state "[which extends only to discipline."]*

I must confess my ignorance. Till now I have thought discipline as proper an object of legislation as doctrine. And, unless Christ

dependency, if the humiliation above described is to be the effect of this laboured *alliance ?*

* See the *Alliance* p. 180. and view of Lord Bolingbroke's philosophy, letter iv. p. 146.—There is not a word in the whole controversy concerning church authority of a looser and more equivocal signification *than* the word *discipline*. *Rites* and *ceremonies* are reckoned by some writers among the articles of *discipline*. And yet *rites* and *ceremonies* may be *idolatrous*. *Tests* and *subscriptions* are considered by others, under the notion of *discipline ;* and thus the magistrate, upon the principles of the alliance, may have the power of altering doctrines. Bishop Hoadly's state of the case prevents this confusion. Where-ever conscience is concerned, whether in matters of doctrine or discipline, there all lawgivers or judges, Christ alone excepted, are excluded.

hath left no rules of discipline for the subjects of his kingdom, the civil magistrate and the church too are excluded from altering discipline by the same considerations which prohibit their altering doctrines. That Christ hath left rules or laws of discipline for his subjects, I think I may venture to assert on the testimony of the learned author himself, who, when the merits of this complex theory were not in agitation, could plainly see the superior authority of the christian discipline in comparison with that of the *alliance*.

The case was this: a certain chancellor of a diocese, an officer appointed to execute the code of discipline by the powers in alliance, having unhappily incurred the learned author's displeasure, is summoned by him before a FOREIGN JUDICATORY (a judicatory *foreign* to that wherein the said chancellor presided), that is to say, HOLY SCRIPTURE. If this be really the case, what becomes of the ALLIANCE?

To this *foreign judicatory*, however, let us all appeal; and, when the *sacramental test* can stand its ground before this tribunal, it will readily be given up as an object of REFORMATION.

It may now, perhaps, be expected that I should give some account of a publication, which has in it so very little of the complexion of the times, and which appears at a season, when there is but little prospect of engaging the attention of the public to subjects of this nature and tendency.

The reader will perceive, that some part of these papers were written at times very distant

from others, and not in the same order in which they now appear. Persons and facts are mentioned or alluded to, which, when they were noticed, were still upon the stage, but have now many of them disappeared; nor has the author perhaps been sufficiently careful to adjust his remarks upon them to the present period, so as to avoid the imputation of anachronisms.

The *Free and Candid Disquisitions*, and afterwards the *Essay on Spirit*, gave occasion to several little pamphlets on the subject of a review of our public service, and to the discussion of several particular points, which were supposed to be proper objects of it. And at the same time, when *cards* were not in the way, the same topics were debated in private parties.

Into one of these the author was accidentally thrown where it was his hap to mention a glaring inconsistency in the case of subscription to our established articles of religion. Some gentlemen of good sense and respectable stations, then present, expressed the utmost surprize on the occasion; nor did a dignified divine, who also made one of the company, seem to have been apprized of the impropriety before it was then mentioned, though, for the honour of the church, he made an attempt at a solution by that sort of casuistry, of which several samples may be met with in the ensuing discourse.

One of the lay-gentlemen desired to have the case stated upon paper, which, after some time, was presented to him, and makes a part of the following work, though placed at some distance from the beginning. In going

through the particulars then to be considered, the author found new matter arising upon him, which he pursued at leisure hours, without thinking of putting any thing into form upon the subject immediately.

In those days, the two principal sees were filled with two prelaees, well known, while they were in subordinate stations, for their zealous attachment to civil liberty, and for their enlarged, generous, and christian sentiments in religion; in which one of them persisted to the last moment of his life, and in the highest eminence of station; and gave proof of it in a remarkable instance, which, when the time comes to give his character its full lustre, will do him honour with our latest posterity.

Here was then encouragement to venture something for the truth, and on that fair occasion the author methodized and put the finishing hand to his collections. But a sudden change in the face of affairs quickly convinced him, that a publication of such sentiments would be now quite out of season.

It will certainly now be demanded, if out of season then, what is it that hath brought to light a work of this sort at a period, when there is not only so considerable a change in the public taste, but when other circumstances, unfavourable to the cause of reformation, seem to dissuade an enterprize of this kind, for still more cogent reasons?

It may look like a paradox to alledge (in answer to this expostulation) that there are others who can give a better account of this matter than the author himself; which, however, is

pretty much the case. Suffice it to say on the part of the author, that his principal inducement to acquiesce in the publication was, his observing the redoubled efforts of popery to enlarge her borders, without being at the pains, as heretofore, to cover her march; and the surprizing indifference with which some public and even clamorous notices of her progress were received, where, one would have thought, both interest and duty were concerned to remark and obstruct her passage.

As this is a matter of some consequence, I must beg a little more of the reader's patience for a few reflections upon it, having first rectified a mistake, into which I was led by a passage in the quarto edition of Dr. Maclaine's translation of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical history.

That passage runs thus: "Hence, in our "times, this great and extensive community "[the reformed church] comprehends in its "bosom, Arminians, Calvinists, Supralapsa-"rians, Sublapsarians, and Universalists, who "live together in charity and friendship, and "unite their efforts in healing the breach, and "diminishing the weight and importance of "those controversies which separate them "from the communion of the Romish church."*

Having never seen Mosheim's latin, nor having any opportunity of consulting it, I did not suspect any error in the translation, but supposed Mosheim's sense was truly represented, and on that supposition, remarked upon

* Mosheim, Comp. View, p. 574. vol. II. Dr. Maclaine's Translation, 4to.

the passage, in the two former editions of *The Confessional.*

It now appears, that Dr. Maclaine, in a very pardonable moment of inadvertency, mistook the sense of his author, who meant only to say, that "certain protestant sects, living together upon friendly terms, use their joint endeavours to diminish the importance of those controverted points, which separate them from each other."*

Upon this passage, however, thus mistranslated, Dr. Maclaine speculates, as follows:— "How such a strange and groundless aspersion could escape the pen of our excellent historian, is difficult to conceive. The reformed churches were never at such a distance from the spirit and doctrine of the church of Rome, as they are at this day. The improvements in science, that characterise the last and present age, seem to render a relapse into Romish superstition morally impossible in those who have been once delivered from its baneful influence. If the dawn of science and philosophy, towards the end of the sixteenth, and the commencement of the seventeenth century, was so favourable to the cause of the reformation, how must their progress, which has a kind of influence even upon the multitude, confirm us in the principles that occasioned our separation from the church of Rome?"

* Mosheim's words are these: "Hinc in ampliſſimo hoc cœtu hodie Arminiani, Supralapſarii, Infralapſarii, Univerſaliſtæ, amicé inter ſe vivunt, et junctis id agunt viribus, ut pondera litium, quæ Chriſtianos â Romana communione ſemotos deſtinent, magis extenuentur et diminuantur." p. 909.

This, I own, is specious, and there is no doubt but the improvements in science, &c. may seem in theory to render a relapse into Romish superstition morally impossible with respect to the reformed churches: but I hope Dr. Maclaine will excuse me for taking the liberty to observe, that, "whether the reformed churches were never at such distance from the spirit and doctrine of the church of Rome as they are at this day," is a question of fact, the resolution of which will not depend so much upon hypothetical reasoning, as upon the observation of what has actually passed in those reformed churches.

I am very ready to acknowledge, that "the dawn of science and philosophy, towards the end of the sixteenth, and the commencement of the seventeenth century," was extremely favourable to the cause of reformation, and that the progress of science in those days, for some time, was more favourable still. But what I question, and what I should be glad to see well proved, is, that "the influence of science in promoting the cause of reformation, and subduing the spirit and doctrine of the church of Rome, has been equally powerful and successful in these latter times, in proportion to the progressive improvement of it." And with respect to this question, till I am better satisfied, I am obliged to hold the negative. Methinks modern hisory, and the speculations of some very judicious observers, have not only shewn very considerable abatements in this influence, but have likewise very well accounted for them:

and some circumstances are mentioned in the ensuing tract, not altogether foreign to this purpose.

On another hand; has there been no progress, no improvement in science and philosophy in popish countries? This cannot be said. Are the improvements in these articles in some of those countries, less or fewer, than in any reformed country? Neither will this be affirmed. What intelligence, then, have we from those popish countries where these improvements are the most conspicuous, of a proportionable progress of religious reformation in them? In what respect is either the spirit or the doctrine of the church established in those countries altered from what it was in the days of Galileo? Dr. Maclaine informs us at the end of this note, that "the essential "character of popery is a spirit of despotism "and persecution, founded upon an extrava-"gant and ridiculous pretension to infallibili-"ty," in which I most cordially agree with him.* And as long as this pretension lasts, we

* The learned and benevolent Dr. Worthington, in his *Essay on the scheme and conduct, procedure and extent of Man's Redemption*, published 1743, p. 156, hath intimated as if some of the grosser errors of popery had of late been explained in a manner more agreeable to truth and scripture [than heretofore]. I suppose he might have the emollients of the late bishop of Meaux in his eye, most of which have been since disowned, and some of them, if I mistake not, condemned by his own church. The truth is, these explanations were, as the worthy doctor properly expresses it, forced from the said bishop and his coadjutors by the very nature of the service to which they were applied. The same entertaining and instructive writer adds, a little lower, "Nor do the papists at present seem to "thirst so much after protestant blood."—But this, however, he qualifies by saying, "though there is reason to suspect that they "still retain but too much of the old leaven, *durst they suffer it to*

shall in vain look for any alteration either in the spirit or doctrine of the church which makes it.

The *seeming moral impossibility* of protestants relapsing into popery, to whatever it may amount, may, perhaps, be more reasonably accounted for (especially among the multitude) from the influence of education, and particularly from an early and familiar acquaintance with the scriptures, than from any improvements in human science. It must indeed be confessed, that human science has been eminently useful in the advancement of scripture-knowledge among scholars? but this has been the most remarkable in points of inferior importance. In a gospel preached to the poor, and, consequently, adapted to all capacities, one would naturally look for a plainness and simplicity which does not want the elucidations of human science, in those articles at least which are of universal concern to people of all ranks and degrees. Accordingly we find this character given of, and fully exemplified in, the gospel of Christ. And this

"*work out.*" Since the time that this obſervation was made, we have had repeated inſtances of the old leaven's working as much as ever, and of its being quite ready to work out, both in this and a neighbouring country, upon the firſt favourable occaſion. For my part, I cannot but look upon theſe conceſſions, even with theſe drawbacks upon them, as inſtances of an eaſineſs towards popery in proteſtants of the preſent age, unknown to our forefathers, and for which, however, they had full as much reaſon as we have. It is well known, by ſome late productions of popiſh advocates, what uſe they make of theſe conceſſions from proteſtants, even while they themſelves (conſcious of the truth of the caſe) are unable to ſhew, either from matters of fact, or any real modification of their ancient principles, that they have the leaſt right to them. How long is this deluſion to laſt, and where will it end?

plainness and simplicity applies so materially to the confutation of the errors of popery, that, even in the infancy of the reformation, and where improvements in human science were totally out of the question, the common people, only by reading the scriptures in their mother tongue, were enabled to put to silence the subtilest of the popish doctors with whom they were engaged, as may be seen in a variety of instances in Fox's Martyrology. And notwithstanding the kind of influence that science and philosophy may be supposed to have upon the multitude of these days, I very much question whether an equal number of them would acquit themselves so well in the like conflicts.

As to the proficients in modern science and philosophy, I make a very considerable difference between the fund of this kind of learning they lay in, and the actual influence it has upon them, with respect to their religious opinions. To suppose the influence equal to these improvements, is to suppose that a large majority of mankind will always be governed by their own convictions, and that no worldly motives or temptations whatever will seduce them into compliances and conformities to what they know to be wrong. There is the strongest presumption that the matter of fact is just contrary to this supposition, not to mention the indifference and secularity of the present times in comparison of the zeal and piety of the first protestants. The question, however, as I said above, is a question of fact, and to be determined by what has actually happened among the reformed in those regions where

these motives and temptations are laid in their way. Have we no reason to suspect, that if an accurate account were to be taken for a century backwards, the balance in point of conversions in those Roman catholic countries which are the most improved in science and philosophy, would be greatly against the reformed religion ?

While I took Dr. Maclaine's translation of the passage above-mentioned to exhibit the true sense of his author, I imagined Mosheim might chiefly have had in his eye the doctrines of Arminianism, concerning which, the more rational members of the several reformed churches, so called, are now said to entertain more temperate sentiments than heretofore. According to Dr. Maclaine, "Arminianism may be "said to be predominant among the members "of the church of England."* I imagine it may have prevailed in some degree, among individuals in some other reformed churches abroad, besides those of the Remonstrants. But it will hardly be denied, that some of the doctrines of Arminius, have a manifest tendency to diminish the weight and importance of certain controversies that separated the first protestants from the communion of the church of Rome.

On another hand, improvements in philosophy, or something so called, are said to have made many sceptics in religion, in all churches reformed and unreformed. And scepticism, when, in a melancholy or a departing hour, it is mixed, as frequently has been the case, with

* See Dr. Maclaine's next note.

a certain degree of apprehension of what may be hereafter, is very apt to take its repose in the bosom of that church which offers the speediest and most effectual security every way, without putting the perplexed patient to the trouble of examining and determining for himself. And of all the churches in Christendom, that which offers this sort of security with the greatest confidence, is, out of all question, the church of Rome.*

But this is not all. There is one science wherein the reformed churches, perhaps in most countries, have made as remarkable improvements as in any other: I mean the science of politics, which, as some think, has had no obscure effects upon them all. And church-politics, in reformed countries, chiefly aim at

* The improvements in science and philosophy in the last and present ages have, perhaps, never been exhibited to more advantage than in the famous French work called *Encyclopedie*. It is well known, however, that the freedoms taken with revealed religion in some articles of it, occasioned a public censure to be passed upon it, and, if I mistake not, a prohibition with respect to the sale of it. The gentlemen chiefly concerned in that noble compilation, are the greatest geniuses of France. It is needless to mention their names. They are eminent all over Europe. I have been informed, that all, or most of them, profess the Roman catholic religion, and comply with the forms of that church. Without inquiring into the nature of the impressions those forms make upon them, we may presume they will conform to the end.—In the last age Cardinal Richelieu was called an atheist over and over. Father Caussin insinuated something very like it to the king himself, and gave instances. Richelieu was a man of science, and an encourager of its progress. When he came to die, all suspicions of his heterodoxy vanished. He went through the minutest superstitions of the church, even though he was told by the curate who attended him, that some of them might be dispensed with on account of his quality. See *Vie de Cardinal Duc de Richelieu*, *Cologne*, 1696, p. 313 and 592 of the second volume. The French Memoirs afford other examples in great abundance.

accommodating all the peculiarities in their respective systems, as much as may be, to the religion of the magistrate; a conduct, which, out of all doubt, cannot be defended in every instance, upon any principles which are of protestant original. It is the same sort of policy which hath laid to sleep so many controversies among the reformed, which some perhaps may think a blessing. Controversies, however, have had this good in them; they have kept the several parties among the reformed upon their guard, not to incur the reproach of each other of advancing too near to the quarters of the common enemy. We are told with some degree of exultation, that this contentious spirit is subsided. It is a good hearing, if it hath not sunk along with it, the simplicity, godly sincerity, and truly apostolical zeal, of our first reformers against popery: otherwise we may have no great occasion to rejoice; and should be sent to learn what that meaneth, MY *peace I leave with you*, MY *peace I give unto you;* NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU.*

* Dr. Maclaine, in the second of three Appendixes subjoined to the new edition of his translation of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, hath replied to this representation: alledging, that, "the excessive "apprehensions of the author of *The Confessional*, of the progress "of popery, have had an undue influence on his method of reason-"ing on this subject." Being thus called to a rehearing, let us once more state the propositions advanced by the doctor in the note of his former edition, viz. 1. That *the reformed churches were never at such a distance from the spirit and doctrine of the church of* Rome, *as at this day.* 2. That *the dawn of science and philosophy towards the end of the sixteenth, and the commencement of the seventeenth century, being favourable to the cause of reformation, the progress of them in these latter times must be still more favourable, and confirm us in the principles that occasioned our separa-*

But, not to lay too much stress upon circumstances, suppositions, and inferences from

tion from the church of Rome. In this preface, the matter of fact asserted in the former of these propositions is disputed: in the latter, the premises are admitted, and only the consequence drawn from them called in question. But, before we proceed to consider the doctor's manner of supporting his opinions, let us stop to contemplate the singular situation of this second Appendix. It is not a little remarkable that it stands between two others, in the first of which, the doctor finds himself obliged to defend the first Reformers, against a charge of enthusiasm, brought by a modern protestant philosopher, of the first reputation, even in Dr. Maclaine's esteem: in the latter, the Doctor undertakes the defence of a protestant prelate entering into a correspondence with some popish doctors, for the purpose of bringing about an union between the protestant church, in which he presided, and the church of Rome. In dealing with the philosopher, Dr. Maclaine is reduced to the necessity of allowing, that there was not only a species of enthusiasm, but a large mixture of human passions, and even of intemperate zeal, in the first reformers; concessions, which, I can assure him, the author of *The Confessional* would not have made, but under restrictions very different from those which seem to have occurred to Dr. Maclaine. In my humble opinion, the Doctor had done much better, had he left the philosopher in the hands of the writer of those incomparable letters on Mr. Hume's History, to which he hath referred his readers. And so, it seems, have some others thought; for it hath been observed, that the Doctor, in this strictures on Mr. Hume, hath shifted the ground of the controversy, more than once. [*Critical Review, October* 1769, p. 243, 244.] But that is not my business, which is only to shew by this instance, that modern improvements in science and philosophy have been rather unfavourable to the cause of Reformation. It is true Dr. Maclaine tells us, [Appendix ii. p. 12. of the 4to. edition] that "neither the science nor the genius of Mr. Hume are the "causes of his scepticism." But I am of opinion, Mr. Hume would, in this case, appeal from the persuasion and equitable affirmation of Dr. Maclaine, to the judgment of his peers, where, I dare say, he would be sure of a verdict. The result is, upon the whole, that Dr. Maclaine undertakes, in his second Appendix, to support an hypothesis, which is most unfortunately contrasted by the case exhibited in his first. The counterpoise in his third Appendix is still more unlucky for his proposition, that *the reformed churches were never at such a distance from the spirit and doctrine of the church of Rome, as they are at this day.* It holds forth to public

mere appearances, let us attend to a remarkable

view, a prelate at the head of that church, which the Doctor in his tranſlation of Moſheim's hiſtory dignifies with the title of *the chief and leading branch of that great community, which goes under the denomination of the reformed church.* entering into a correſpondence with certain doctors of the Sorbonne, in order to promote an union with their popiſh church, on the foot of mutual conceſſions. It exhibits the opinion of a learned and ingenious paſtor of a conſiderable proteſtant church in a neighbouring country (who cannot be ſuppoſed to be a ſtranger to the ſentiments of his fellow-paſtors in that region) that the ſaid prelate was greatly in the right to enter into this correſpondence. Every one now knows whence Dr. Maclaine had his materials for the defence of this prelate, as well as the ſpirit and quality of thoſe proteſtant clergymen by whom he was encouraged to undertake it, one of them, perhaps, in the higheſt range of eccleſiaſtical importance. And are we ſtill to believe that the reformed churches were never at ſuch a diſtance from the ſpirit and doctrine of the church of Rome, as at this day?—The matter might very ſafely be reſted here; for the Doctor profeſſes only to confirm his Theory in this ſecond Appendix, and attempts *that*. only by bringing preſumptive evidence, which is far from being concluſive as to the matter of fact in diſpute. But, as this kind of evidence is apt to be taken by ſome ſorts of readers for more than its real value, it may be proper, for the ſake of ſuch, to examine to what Dr. Maclaine's proofs amount, towards the deciſion of the queſtions before us. In the firſt place, we have a quotation from D'Alembert, ſetting forth, the ſuperiority of the proteſtant univerſities in Germany, in compariſon with thoſe of the Romiſh perſuaſion, p. 13. (The ſentiments of D'Alembert may be found in the London Magazine for 1764.) But has D'Alembert ſhewn, that theſe univerſities had done, or were doing, any thing towards advancing the proteſtant reformation, in proportion to this ſuperiority? Can Dr. Maclaine apply this citation from Mr. D'Alembert in evidence of this advancement? No, he does not pretend to it. He contents himſelf with inferring from this ſuperiority, "the connexion there is between "improvements in ſcience, and the free ſpirit of the reformed reli-"gion." An original connexion of this kind there was without doubt; but the queſtion is, does it ſtill continue? Will Dr. Maclaine affirm, that it is impoſſible theſe improvements in ſcience ſhould be going on, while the free ſpirit of the reformed religion is under manifeſt controul from other cauſes? The queſtion between us is, concerning the influence theſe improvements in ſcience actually have in promoting the cauſe of the reformation, and not concerning the

fact, brought indeed on another occasion by

influence they might or ought to have, in virtue of the ſuppoſed connexion. Does Dr. Maclaine ſuppoſe that D'Alembert's *ſorrow* aroſe from the conſideration, that the reformed religion made no quicker progreſs in the popiſh univerſities of Germany? On another hand, would the Doctor conclude, from the publication of one wrong-headed book in ſo large a city as Vienna, that the Roman catholics of Germany had none of the free ſpirit of the reformed religion among them? As it happens, there is recorded an illuſtrious inſtance to the contrary. In leſs than two years after the appearance of this Ariſtotelic ſyſtem, viz. Jan. 1, 1752, *John Joſeph De Trautſohn*, Archbiſhop of Vienna, publiſhed a paſtoral letter to the clergy within his juriſdiction, (ſee a tranſlation of this letter from the original latin, in the Gentleman's Magazine for March, 1760, vol. xxx. p. 120—124.) wherein he laments, with great zeal and freedom, the devotional regard paid by his flock to *apocryphal revelations, precarious miracles, indulgences granted to particular churches, the worſhip paid to particular ſaints, the truſt repoſed in their images, in proceſſions, confraternities, and other ſuperſtitious dotages* (ſuperſtitioſa deliramenta;) ſeverely reproving the preachers, for leading the attention of the poor people to theſe external trifles, and omitting to inſtruct them in the ſalutary doctrines of the word of God; of which he ſpeaks in the ſame ſtrain, and with the ſame veneration that a zealous proteſtant would do. What proficiency this worthy prelate had made in philoſophy, and what are called the liberal ſciences, does not appear; his appeal is to *the word of God only*, to which he ſuppoſes the reſt of his clergy might have as free acceſs as he had; and the Ariſtotelic ſyſtem could not be ſuppoſed to have any influence in obſtructing a reformation built upon that foundation. Not to mention, that the ſtate and quality of this illuſtrious prelate might be ſuppoſed to promote a reform in religion, as much at leaſt as the work of an obſcure monk could be ſuppoſed to retard it. What was the event? The Archbiſhop was cenſured and ſilenced, for reaſons merely political. And has not ſomething parallel to this happened to proteſtant ſtates, where the *free ſpirit* of the reformed religion once ſhone out with as much luſtre as in any other country?—The little appearance of the *free ſpirit* of the reformed religion in Italy and Spain obliges the Doctor to ſay, that "thoſe countries are ſtill under the gloom of "the canon law, monkiſh literature, and ſcholaſtical metaphyſics." With reſpect to Italy indeed he acknowledges, that "ſome rays of "philoſophical light are now breaking through the cloud. *Boſcovich*," he tells us, "and ſome geniuſes of the ſame ſtamp, have

Dr. Mosheim, but which fully justifies his sup-

" dared to hold up the lamp of science, without feeling the rigour " of the inquisition, or meeting with the fate of *Galileo*. If this " dawning revolution," continues the Doctor, " be brought to " any degree of perfection, it may, in due time, produce effects, " that at present we have little hopes of." But will not the Italians tell him, that he is rating their improvements too low? There is one Baretti, now or lately resident in England, who hath given us a copious account of the manners and customs of his countrymen, among whom he reckons up above seventy learned men by name, as " a few among the learned of Italy, with whose conver- " sation and works he is sure any Englishman will be pleased, let " his knowledge be ever so great and multifarious." p. 217, 218. vol. I. He gives us, moreover, a long list of books, in almost all branches of learning, produced in the single town of Brescia, from the year 1724 [which is much about the time when D'Alembert (Destruction des Jesuites p. 103) says, the philosophers began to be listened to in France] to the year 1766. That this Baretti is a man of science, there is upon record the testimony of men whose judgment neither Dr. Maclaine nor I must be hardy enough to dispute. This, I should think, is much more than a dawning towards the degree of perfection, upon which the Doctor seems to build some hopes. What effects then has it produced hitherto? Would Dr. Maclaine think it? This very man of learning, not having the fear of philosophy before his eyes, most strenuously defends all the superstitious processions and rareeshews of his country, not only as harmless, but as of the greatest public utility; sneering, in the warmth of his zeal (but surely with sufficient impudence), at the manners and customs of the country which entertains and protects him, by way of contrast. Nor is this all. This very learned man, after acknowledging the difficulties and disadvantages which his countrymen lie under with respect to the publication and sale of their works, perfectly shudders at the thoughts of a *free press*, " lest the Pope " should be called *Antichrist*, and mother church *a whore*;" which, in his ideas, would be irreligion; very politely dignifying those who do not agree with him, with the name of dunces.—From Italy, pass we back to France, where the Doctor seems to allow that very considerable improvements in learning and science have taken place. And here the Doctor thinks " he might grant, that the " balance of conversions in this country, if an accurate account " could be taken, would be against the reformed religion, without " giving up any thing he maintained in his note." That is to say, without giving up his theory, *viz.* that, " the progress of science " and learning must confirm the reformed in the principles that oc-

posed observation as exhibited by Dr. Mac-

" caſioned their ſeparation from the church of Rome ;" and the conſequence thereupon depending, namely,—that " the reformed " churches were never at ſuch a diſtance from the ſpirit and doctrine " of the church of Rome, as at this day." I ſhould however think it pretty difficult to maintain an hypotheſis, after allowing matters of fact which are juſt contrary to it. However, the Doctor will not thus give up his theory ; and where do we find him in the end of the conteſt ? Even in the quarters of his antagoniſt, brought thither indeed by a round about way, and a little parade of ſkirmiſhing for his cauſe, but effectually deſerting it, by allowing all that his adverſary contends for, viz. " That political conſiderations and ſecular views " are too hard for the influence of ſcience, and the conviction of " principle, and that the heroiſm required to counteract them, even " in this enlightened country of France, is a thing too rare in " modern times." The point of honour I willingly reſign to the worthy Doctor; that is to ſay, the honour of expreſſing my ſentiments in better language than I have done myſelf. In the ſecond place, the Doctor admits, that men eminent for learning and genius have adhered ſeriouſly to the profeſſion of popery. " But what," he aſks, " does it prove ?" and then anſwers, " It only proves that " in ſuch perſons, there are circumſtances that counteract the natural " influence of learning and ſcience," which is all I deſire it to prove ; for, this being granted, I will take the liberty to add, that ſuch circumſtances are not peculiar to ſuch men of genius and learning as adhere ſeriouſly to the profeſſion of popery. Does not Dr. Maclaine mean to account for the ſcepticiſm of Meſſrs. Hume and D'Alembert in the very ſame way ? And what advantage will Dr. Maclaine gain in favour of his theory, till he has proved that *ſuch circumſtances* are *not common* to a majority of men eminent for genius and learning of all religious denominations ? If this fact is really againſt him, how will his barely attempting to account for it ſerve his hypotheſis ? —At length the Doctor appeals to particular facts, the principal of which are, the oppoſition the Pope's authority hath met with in France, Spain, and Portugal, and the expulſion of the Jeſuits from thoſe three kingdoms. The Doctor ſeems to ſpeak of the firſt of theſe articles as a new phænomenon. As if this oppoſition had not happened in all theſe countries before the dawn of learning and ſcience as well as ſince ! As if it had not happened over and over, that while one of theſe powers was oppoſing the Pope's authority, another of them was vigorouſly ſupporting it ! As if France itſelf had not rejected and ſubmitted to the Pope's authority by turns, almoſt ever ſince there was a Pope and a king of France ! As if this late, or if he pleaſes this preſent oppoſition to the Pope's au-

laine, and is the more interesting to us, as it

thority, were owing to the influence of learning and ſcience, and not merely to the politics of the day! Archbiſhop Wake, I dare ſay, will find more credit with Dr. Maclaine than I can pretend to. "We," ſays the Archbiſhop, "honeſtly deny the Pope all authority "over us. They pretend in words, to allow him ſo much as is "conſiſtent with what they call their Gallican privileges. But let "him uſe it never ſo little contrary to their good-liking, they pro-"teſt againſt it, appeal to a general council, and then mind him "as little as we can do:" [See Dr. Maclaine's third Appendix 4to, p. 49.] which his grace might have confirmed by examples from hiſtory for ſeveral hundred years backwards. The ſame might be ſhewn of Spain and Portugal, if the compaſs of a note (already perhaps too long) would admit of it. I humbly hope Dr. Maclaine would not put upon us the expulſion of the Jeſuits (who, by the way, were not a little inſtrumental in depriving the ſaintly legend of of its faireſt honours) as the effect of learning and ſcience in progreſſion. Beſides there being a very learned and ſcientific body of men, Mr. D'Alembert as good as owns, that, wicked as they were, reaſon and juſtice would not have compaſſed their expulſion, without their handmaids, human paſſion and perſonal hatred. [*Deſt. des Jeſuites*, P. i. p. 13.] The Venetian edict concerning the inquiſition, is not more than (if ſo much as) the revival of certain laws of their ſtate, enacted before the time of Father Paul. In one word, I would not have Dr. Maclaine be too ſure that the blow given to the Pope's abſolute power, in France, will be mortal. The reſtoration of the Jeſuits, even in that kingdom, may, for aught he or I know, happen in no long time, and with it as much deference for his Holineſs as ever he had among them. Who knows what the religious or political ſentiments of their next monarch, upon theſe heads, may be? I am much miſtaken if Mr. D'Alembert himſelf is void of ſuſpicion, that the reſtoration of the Jeſuits may one day take place [u. ſ. p. 200, 201]. If our news from Italy may be depended upon, his Holineſs hath already told the king of France, that not only a number of Roman catholic princes, but even one proteſtant monarch is againſt the abolition of the Jeſuits, and hath dexterouſly enough turned upon the French their own doctrine, that a council is above the Pope, whence it may come to paſs, that the French, in order to induce the Pope to decree the abolition, may be forced to acknowledge that his Holineſs is at leaſt above the conncil of Trent, which, his Holineſs ſays, authoriſed the Jeſuits. [Vid. *St. James's chronicle, November* 21, 1769.] The truth of the matter ſeems to be this: Popiſh princes, though ever ſo liberally minded, and free from vulgar prejudices, while they are ſurrounded

immediately relates to our own established church.

with a bigoted and avaricious clergy, can make no way for thoſe improvements in ſcience, from which the correction of popular ſuperſtition might moſt hopefully be expected. The maxims alſo of their own ſtateſmen and political philoſophers will obſtruct their endeavours on another hand. We have ſeen what the ſcientific Baretti hath ſaid on the ſubject. I will now give an anecdote to illuſtrate the influence of the clergy, when oppoſed to the ſentiments of the prince in a late inſtance; for the authenticity of which I do not pretent to anſwer; but ſuch as it is, together with my authority for it, it is at the reader's ſervice. "Dr. Turberville Needham "lately received an invitation from the king of Portugal, to read "lectures of philoſophy at Liſbon, which the doctor very gladly "accepted. In one of his diſcourſes, as he was endeavouring to "explain the Newtonian ſyſtem to his auditors, he was interrupted "by an officer of the holy inquiſition, who aſked him, whether what "he advanced was *per theſin*, or *hypotheſin?* The doctor, luckily "for himſelf, anſwered the latter. Had he ſaid the former, he "would, in all probability, have been clapt up in the inquiſition. "However, the doctor took the firſt opportunity of getting on board "an Engliſh ſhip, and bade farewel to Liſbon." *Public Ledger, Saturday November* 11, 1769. The Philoſopher was ſenſible how little he could avail himſelf, in ſuch a caſe, even of the king's protection.—It might have been expected that Dr. Maclaine would have ſaid ſomething in ſupport of his aſſertion, that, "the reformed "churches were never at ſuch a diſtance from the ſpirit and doc- "trines of the church of Rome, as they are at this day." It had been a comfortable hearing, that the reformed churches of Saxony and Heſſe, and ſome others, have found no impreſſions made upon them by the converſion of their reſpective ſovereigns. It hath been known in ſome caſes, that political conſiderations have had as much weight with the ſubjects of ſuch ſovereigns, as learning and ſcience. The doctor calls the negative of his propoſition a paradox; but ſeems to decline entering into a cloſe examination of it, in the hope that the fact may not be true; giving broad hints however, that the moment the proof appears, he is prepared to account for it; and I will not deny that I have half a mind to ſet him to work. In the firſt place with reſpect to doctrines, I mean ſuch as are merely theological. It is well known that concerning ſome of theſe, there are diviſions among the papiſts, as well as among the proteſtants. The jeſuits, the chief ſupport of the papacy, think and

"As to the spirit of the established church

teach upon the points of predestination and grace as the Arminians do among the reformed. The Jansenists hold the doctrine of St. Austin, which is understood to be the doctrine of the Calvinists; accordingly the Jansenists are constantly reproached by their fellow-catholics, as heretics, of the same kidney with Luther, Calvin, Zanchius, &c. and indeed, pursue the doctrine of the Jansenists to its obvious consequences, and there is an utter end of all the immense treasures of the church, arising from the doctrine of merit, supererogation, &c. Dr. Maclaine will hardly deny, that Arminianism hath gained, and is still gaining, ground in the reformed churches. I leave him to draw the conclusion. Again, the reformed who call themselves orthodox hold, as the church of Rome does, the doctrine of the separate existence of the soul; and those among them who make the reviviscence of the soul, as well as of the body, to depend upon the redemption purchased by Christ, are stigmatized as *Sadducees*, *Soulsleepers*, *Materialists*, and what not that is odious. Yet nothing more certain than that popish purgatory, saint-worship, and other idolatrous practices, have their whole authority from the doctrine of the separate existence of the soul, which has been acknowledged, by some of the most inlightened among the reformed, to be a doctrine rather of the light of nature, or the light of philosophy, than of the word of God. Among the papists indeed it stands upon another bottom, viz. the canon of a venerable council, with a pope at its head. And so much for doctrines.—The spirit of popery (the imposing, intolerant spirit) has indeed been disavowed in words, by most of the reformed churches, but too much adopted in practice in all of them. It is true, they have been at different periods, and according to the different dispositions of their civil rulers, at a greater or a less distance from it: and perhaps not at the greatest at this present time. I am heartily sorry there should be so affecting an instance of this, as is exhibited in the case of Mr. Herport of Berne, a worthy fellow-labourer in the cause of religious liberty. Possibly Dr. Maclaine may treat this instance *en bagatelie;* for I observe he says, "It is straining matters too far "to alledge the demand of subscription, as a proof that the establish-"ed church is verging towards popery," p. 17. This, and what goes just before, is stating the matter very favourably for the established church. But they who consider with what circumstances that demand is accompanied, and in what a refusal to comply with it always ends, will find it very difficult to overlook something in the process verging towards the spirit of popery. And when it is further examined, what has been lately advanced, in support of the

" of England, says Dr. Mosheim, in relation

demand, by certain writers, who would gladly pass in the world for pillars of the established church, one might proceed a good deal further, and say very justly of these particular writers, that it will require very little modification of their principles, should they, in other respects, find their account in passing over to the very tents of popery. They would have less to do than those, who in Dr. Maclaine's opinion, are verging towards the reformation.—The doctor intimates (with some caution and obscurity indeed) that the *Methodists* are the most likely to make way for popery, of any other sect within the pale of the reformation, " on account of their fanaticism, dis-" crediting free inquiry, crying down human learning, pretending to " illuminations and impulses, and the like," p. 17. On these heads, let the methodists answer for themselves. I will only observe, that one of these accusations comes a little out of due time, and with no very good grace, after the expulsion of six students from a famous university, whither they came for the purpose of acquiring human learning; and whose only crime was their professing the tenets, and following the devotional practice, of the methodists so called, wherein there was nothing discernible either of the doctrines or the spirit of popery. But the methodists say, there was a spice of both in the course of the proceedings against them, which might perhaps have admitted of some little dispute, if somebody had not put it into Dr. Nowell's head to apologize for the expellers. After which, indeed, more of the protestant profession than the methodists, were surprised to find how far and how suddenly our improvements in learning and science had carried us back towards the pious and catholic quarters of mother church.—I will not pretend to guess for what reason Dr. Maclaine, on this occasion, takes the church of England more especially into his patronage, rather than other reformed churches. Possibly he might be invited to this labour of love by those who furnished him with materials for the defence of archbishop Wake. If that was the case, it is reasonable enough to suppose he must have been favoured by the same hands with his information, at what distance we are at this day from the church of Rome. But were they who are not offended, that *Popish Bishops go about, and exercise every part of their function among us*, likely to give him an impartial state of facts of the same tendency? Would they be forward to transmit to him the accounts published by our modern travellers of the numbers of our protestant youth educated in popish seminaries abroad, or the intelligence we have, from time to time, of Roman catholic seminaries and their designation in our own country? Is it likely the doctor should be informed

" to those who dissent from its rule of doc-

by those gentlemen, of certain decorations in some of our places of protestant worship, copied from the leading objects of popish superstition? The toleration of a popish bishop and popish seminary at Quebec (from which, if I am rightly informed, very disagreeable consequences are likely to ensue) is a matter of more general notoriety.—In a printed sheet now before me, intituled, " The case of " the protestant dissenters of Nova Scotia impartially stated, and " and humbly recommended," it is set forth, that the Roman catholic inhabitants of this colony " are allowed, for reasons of state, to have " a priest among them, with a maintenance provided for him," while many of the protestant dissenting ministers there, men of character, " and regularly educated for the ministry,—are in the most dis- " tressed condition, and must be obliged either to leave the province " or to starve there, unless some relief and assistance can be procured " for them." Now, striking as this representation is, I am apt to believe, from certain tokens in the body of *The Case*, as well as from some other considerations, that it must have undergone some modification since it crossed the ocean. Supposing the law to be open in that province for dissenters of all denominations, popish as well as protestant, a maintenance provided (without saying by whom) for a popish priest, while the ministers officiating among the protestant dissenters are suffered to starve, would be an instance of partiality somewhere, not very favourable to Dr. Maclaine's hypothesis. But when it is understood, that there is a law in this province, enacting, that *every popish priest, or person exercising the function of a popish priest, shall depart out of this province on or before the 25th day of* March 1759; *and if any such person or persons shall be found in the province after the said day, he or they shall upon conviction be adjudged to suffer perpetual imprisonment; and if any person or persons, so imprisoned, shall escape out of prison, he or they shall be adjudged guilty of felony without benefit of clergy*; and enacting farther, that *any person or persons who shall knowingly* HARBOUR, RELIEVE, CONCEAL, *or* ENTERTAIN *any such clergyman of the church of* Rome, *or popish priest, or person exercising the function of a popish priest, shall forfeit fifty pounds, one moiety to his Majesty, for the support of his government in this province, the other to the informer, and shall also be adjudged to be set in the pillory, and to find sureties for his good behaviour at the discretion of the court*;—when, I say, it is understood, that this is a positive law in the province where a popish priest hath, for reasons of state, a maintenance provided for him, is it credible that the protestant solicitors of Nova Scotia should not

" trine and government, we see it no where

ſtrengthen their caſe with a circumſtance of ſo high importance to all his Majeſty's proteſtant ſubjects as well as themſelves? Are they who defy the law of the province in this open manner, in favour of popery, likely to have dealt either legally or equitably with the proteſtant diſſenters there; and can it be ſuppoſed, that the ſufferers would ſuppreſs an account of their hardſhips of that kind, in recommending their caſe, and requeſting relief from the proteſtant mother-country? This ſpirit of timidity and accommodation is not methinks natural to the coloniſts of the preſent period. But this muſt be left to the determination of thoſe through whoſe hands this caſe (moſt remarkable, even in its preſent condition) hath paſſed to the preſs. It is only a conjecture, which may or may not be well grounded, and for which I have no great occaſion in ſtating a fact ſo glaringly inconſiſtent with Dr. Maclaine's preſumptions.—What has paſſed in Grenada is of a more ſerious nature ſtill; but as that matter is now in agitation, and may become the object of public inquiry, I ſhall only give the repreſentation of it from a ſeaſonable and ſalutary caution which has appeared in four or five at leaſt of our public newspapers ſince the commencement of this preſent year 1770: *the proteſtants of the three kingdoms and colonies are requeſted ſeriouſly to conſider what is now tranſacting in the iſland of Grenada, and how far the granting legiſlation and magiſtrature to papiſts may affect the principles of the reformation and revolution.* See the St. James's Chronicle, Thurſday January 18, 1770.—Dr. Maclaine may very ſafely exerciſe his pen in accounting for theſe facts, without coming within the caſe of a commentator on the *Golden-Tooth;* and it is devoutly to be wiſhed, he may be able to do it without aſcribing theſe appearances to an indifference ſomewhere, and an indolence ſomewhere elſe, with reſpect to the reformed religion, which, if they do not denote a ſpirit of approximation to Rome, denote at leaſt a deplorable decay of that ſpirit, to whoſe operations in our magnanimous proteſtant anceſtors we are indebted for the portions of civil and religious liberty we now enjoy.—"We do not live," ſays Dr. Maclaine, "in the days of a LAUD." True, not in the days of a church governor of that name. But be it knwn to the doctor, that Laud left his mantle behind him, which is preſerved to this day as a precious relic, not without the virtue of conferring a double portion of his ſpirit upon the venerators of it. And let any one honeſtly characteriſe the man, who was a ſcandal to thoſe days, or others, who, after his example, have ſcandaliſed other days, and he may be ſure to hear from the keepers of the archives where the mantle is depoſited, of his *baſely trampling on the aſhes of the venerable*

"better than in the conduct of Dr. Wake, "archbishop of Canterbury, who formed a "project of peace and union between the En- "glish and Gallican churches, founded upon "this condition, that each of the two com- "munities should retain the greatest part of "their respective and peculiar doctrines."*

dead. [See an Act-Sermon preached at Oxford, by one Dr. Frampton, July 9, 1769.] "Nor," continues the Doctor, "do "his successors seem to have imbibed his spirit. I don't hear that "the claims of church power are carried high in the present times, or "that a spirit of intolerance characterises the episcopal hierarchy." There is no depending, as we have just now seen, upon what Dr. Maclaine does *not* hear. What does he think of *depriving and excommunicating all those who* IN ANY RESPECT *depart from the public institution?* This is indeed the sentence of a subordinate clerk, a *would-be* successor to Laud, no doubt; for whose spirit, I would hope, if I durst, his superiors will not think themselves answerable, as they must know, that, take our public institution all together, it is not possible, even for those who desire to adhere to it with the utmost precision, *not to depart from it in many respects.* And though it may be true that our episcopal hierarchy, as it is supplied at present, is not, in general, characterised by a spirit of intolerance, yet surely we have something bad enough to apprehend from the succession, if these approximating gentry (who, by the bye, have no reason to complain of the discouragement from the episcopal quarter) think of making their way to the bench, by retailing such maxims as that above-mentioned. Undoubtedly improvements in science and philosophy operate upon these geniuses with considerable effect!

* Compend. View, vol. ii. p. 576. Dr. Maclaine's Translation, 4to. Mosheim's words are these.—GUIL. WAKIUS, *antistes non ita pridem* Cantuarientis, *paucos ante annos, pacem cum ecclesia Gallicana, salvis utriusque partis sententiis plerisque, facere voluit.* The long note in the second edition of this preface is now rendered useless by the publication of Dr. Maclaine's third Appendix to his Supplement to the quarto edition of Dr. Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History; and of the examination of that Appendix, in the latter part of Occasional Remarks upon some late strictures on *the Confessional*, Part II. to which they who desire to know the true state of the controversy are referred. It is indeed a controversy which, as it has been managed by the advocates for archbishop Wake, abounds

What a door is here opened for reflexion! A protestant archbishop of Canterbury, a pretended champion too of the protestant religion, sets on foot a project for union with a popish church, and that with concessions in favour of the grossest superstition and idolatry; and this represented as the spirit of the established church of England, in relation to those who dissent from its rule of doctrine and government!

'Tis true, there are protestant dissenters from the rule of government of the established church of England, who agree with her in her rule of doctrine; and Dr. Mosheim's instance being brought as an indication of the spirit of the church of England in general, it might be supposed this established church would go as far to meet these dissenters, as to meet the papists.—I wish this could be said. But our history affords no instance of an archbishop of Canterbury negotiating with protestant dissenters upon any such condition as that mentioned by Mosheim: and such of them as, since

with curiosities. For example; Du Pin was freely censured by the orthodox in France, for corresponding with a protestant prelate on so delicate a subject. Whereupon one of his elogists makes the following apology for him: "Ceux qui lui ont reproché ses liaisons et "son commerce de lettres avec Guillaume Wake, Archevêque de "Cantorberie, paroissent n'avoir pas été au fait de cette affaire. "Ces liaisons étoient innocentes, et Mr. Du Pin ne les entretenoit "*que pour l'honneur et l'avantage de l'église.*" Dict. Hist. de Mr. L'AVOCAT, *tom.* ii. Art. PIN.—It should not seem to be the honour and advantage of the church of England, that are here meant; or that Mr. *L'Avocat* should think himself concerned to vindicate DU PIN's *innocence* with respect to any reproachers but the good catholics of France. And yet (who would think it?) this passage has been pointed out as some sort of apology, not to Roman catholics for DU PIN, but to protestants for archbishop WAKE.

the reformation, might have had an inclination that way, have been too wary to go so far as Dr. Wake is said to have done with Du Pin. And if the conduct of the church of England is to be judged of by that of archbishop Wake, the opposition of that prelate to the repeal of the Schism-bill shews, that an union with protestant dissenters, upon the condition offered to the papists, is the last thing the established church of England would think of.

But, happily for us, Dr. Mosheim was mistaken in taking his measure of the spirit of the established church of England, from the spirit of this archbishop of Canterbury. Some bishops may be as apt to be intoxicated with power and pre-eminence as other mortals, and have too often been tempted to extend their domination beyond its established bounds, when, if they had been called to account, the church established (even upon principles of *the alliance)* must have disowned their authority, because the law and the magistrate would. The circumstances of archbishop Wake's transaction with Du Pin and others, concerning an union with the Gallican church, are now, in a good measure, before the public; from which we perceive, that the project could not have been brought to bear without passing through other hands. And I remember enough of the times when Dr. Wake figured at the head of the church, to be very certain that it would then have been lost labour to solicit the consent of a majority even of the members of the church of England to an union with the Gallican (that is, the French popish) church,

even though all the bishops upon the bench had recommended it.

Is our historian then to be condemned, for his temerity in making such a judgement of the church of England? By no means. A treaty of this kind, openly avowed, espoused, and promoted by an archbishop of Canterbury, and with respect to which there was no apparent opposition, might appear to a foreigner a sufficient indication of the spirit of the whole community, and no improper instance of one reformed church, at least, "using her efforts, "in these latter days, to diminish the weight "and importance of those controversies that "separate her from the communion of the "church of Rome."

And here I cannot help remarking that Dr. Maclaine, who has censured Mosheim for his supposed reflection on the protestants in general, seems not only to acknowledge the truth of this particular fact, but likewise, in some measure, to approve of it.

"The interests of the protestant religion, "says he, could not be in safer hands than "archbishop Wake's. He, who so ably and "successfully defended protestantism as a "controversial writer, could not surely form "any project of peace and union with a Ro-"man-catholic church, the terms of which "would have reflected on his character as a "negotiator."*

* What character Archbishop Wake deserved as a negotiator, the public may now judge, from his article in the last volume of the *Biographia Britannica*. Suffice it for the present to say, that the protestant religion never did, nor ever will, want a negotiator with a Roman catholic church. If the proposing an union with

Surely Dr. Maclaine, when he expressed himself thus, did not reflect upon the condition mentioned by Dr. Mosheim as the basis of the treaty between the two churches, namely, that

a popish church was impudent in Leslie, it was at the best officious and presumptuous in Dr. Wake, who should have better known his duty to the church over which he presided, as well as the deference due to the laws of his country, than to have entered into a negotiation of that nature without any authority from either. As for his talents for this kind of negotiation, they are pretty well laid open by his biographer. It appears by his account, that Dr. Wake was fairly duped by the French politicians *giving the line*, and *letting things go on to a certain length*, till the negotiator was fallen irrecoverably into the ambuscade. The event of which was, that, as the archbishop was understood to negotiate for and on the behalf of the church of England, the church of England, by his management, became exposed to the triumphs of her enemies, for which the archbishop ought to have been severely censured. By the way, it should seem as if this negotiating spirit was not yet totally extinguished among us, and as if some of us wanted still to be doing in that way. In the end of a dedication prefixed to a pretty bulky compilation of Ecclesiastical law, published no longer since than 1763, I find it thus written: "Perhaps a *middle state between what the church* "*once was, and what it now is*, may be the condition most desir-"able." What the church of England *once was*, the church of Rome, I apprehend, *now is;* and how we shall come at this desirable condition without some sort of negotiation with her, and taking in his holiness as a party to the compromise, I am not canonist enough to determine. Leslie indeed was absurd enough to desire that the Gallican church might be more popish than she really was. Archbishop Wake flew not quite so high: and, as I take it, this *middle state* was precisely the *most desirable condition* he wanted to bring us to. But the base luck he had in the attempt, one would have thought, had given us enough of it, for one century at least. To be serious: I have read in the writings of some men of no little eminence, in the church of England, that, in order to perfect her reformation, she should go a good way farther from what she *once was*, than she *now is*. But as to this *middle way* of reforming *backwards*, I have no great opinion of it; and was, not many years ago, much inclined to hope, that every proposal and every wish of that tendency had been buried in the graves of the LAUDS, the LESLIES, and the WAKES, never more to rise again in a land of religious and civil liberty.

each of the two communities should retain *the greatest part of their respective and peculiar doctrines.* When we consider to what these *peculiar* doctrines amount, even in the modified popery of the Gallican church, what are we to think of that man's protestantism who should be ready to unite with her upon the terms above-mentioned?

Dr. Wake's merit, as a controversial writer for the protestant religion, will be readily acknowledged; nor is his conduct (friendly to reformation) at the trial of Sacheverell forgotten. But he was not THEN archbishop of Canterbury. It is well known what alteration an elevated situation makes in the magnitude, arrangement, and effect of objects, in the same prospect taken from an inferior position. This had its influence upon Dr. Wake, and it has had the same upon others. And, after all, this instance of a reformed church growing more placable towards the church of Rome, might have been brought home to Dr. Maclaine, as an instance *ad hominem*, even though the doctor had not mistaken Mosheim's sense; which, all things considered, might possibly have appeared to some people in a less invidious light than that of an aspersion.

Dr. Maclaine, indeed, must be much better informed concerning the state of religion abroad than we in this island; and he assures us, in this present year, 1765, that "the reformed churches were never at such a distance from the spirit and doctrine of the church of Rome as at this day;" and if this is said upon good grounds, we cannot but rejoice that our foreign protestant brethren are

so stedfast and immoveable, and have less reason to be alarmed at the contrary appearances at home, where Dr. Maclaine will allow us to be competent judges in our turn.

It hath been lamented of late, that the zeal and vigilance both of pastors and people in the church of England, against popery and popish emissaries, is visibly declined. The papists, strengthened and animated by an influx of Jesuits, expelled even from popish countries for crimes and practices of the worst complexion, open public mass-houses, and affront the laws of this protestant kingdom in other respects, not without insulting some of those who endeavour to check their insolence. It is not long ago that we were told, with the utmost coolness and composure, in a pamphlet written expressly in defence of some proceedings in a certain episcopal society, and, as is conjectured, by somebody in no ordinary station, that "popish bishops go about here, and exercise "every part of their function *without offence*, "*and without observation.*"* A circumstance that can no otherwise be accounted for, than upon the supposition that the two hierarchies are growing daily more and more into a resemblance of each other; which supposition is indeed necessary for the support of the point, in proof of which this notable fact is employed. Surely these phænomena were not common, even in archbishop Wake's time.

Our protestant dissenters in general have, I hope and believe, very different conceptions

* Anſwer to Dr. Mayhew's Obſervations.

of the malignity of popish principles, and of their fatal aspect upon the civil and religious rights of Great Britain. I know some of the worthiest and most judicious among them, who see with concern and anxiety the little interruption that is given to the unwearied endeavours of treacherous priests to pervert his Majesty's protestant subjects to their intolerant superstition, and consequently from their allegiance.—A late case, however, remarkable enough to have taken up no little room in the public prints, hath discovered, that all the leading characters among them are not of the same stamp, and that popery itself may be divested of its terrors in the eyes of a once zealous champion for religious liberty in its fullest extent, when taken into the protection of a man, who, for the time being, had the distribution of the loaves and the fishes.

But let us now proceed to inquire what popery hath done to intitle herself to this complaisance from the reformed churches; what steps she hath taken, or what disposition she hath shewn, to meet all or any of these churches half-way?

And here I will not ask whether the papists have endeavoured to diminish the weight and importance of those controversies they have with us, which are merely of the religious kind. I will not inquire whether and how far the church of Rome hath modified her absurd and impossible doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. I will not examine her on the head of *purgatory*, *saint-worship*, *relics*, *masses for the dead*, *penances*, and other articles, which have no

immediate ill effect upon civil society. I will only inquire whether popery hath reduced her ancient pretensions so far, as to become a friendly, benevolent, and charitable neighbour to persons of the reformed religion.

In the first place, hath she acquitted the protestants of heresy? If not, is she convinced that heretics ought to be tolerated, and that she ought to keep her faith and perform her covenants with them, as well as with persons of her own communion. Or hath she receded from her claim to infallibility, on which these other doctrines are built?

Have the papsits of Great Britain, in particular, given the King and his Government the security of their allegiance, as protestant subjects do? Do they acknowledge no King of Great Britain but his Majesty King GEORGE III! Have not a majority of English papists of rank and fortune Jesuits in their houses, as directors of their consciences? Have not their youth been sent to be educated among Jesuits? Are not the Roman catholic priests, stationed all over England, chiefly of the Jesuitical order? Is it not the doctrine of the Jesuits, that princes may be excommunicated by the Pope, and afterwards deposed or murdered? Are not all protestant princes, and particularly the King of Great Britain, considered by this order of men, as already excomunicated? Are not all persons whose consciences are directed by Jesuits obliged to believe as the Jesuits themselves believe? And are not they who hold these opinions sworn enemies to the protestant government of these kingdoms?

If these questions cannot be answered to the satisfaction of a protestant people, it behoveth every good subject of our gracious Sovereign, and every friend to this country, to keep up a spirit of vigilance and attention to every motion of these dangerous inmates, whom we daily see strengthening their hands with new converts, of whom the leaders of this malignant party will not fail to avail themselves, the moment they find their numbers sufficient to give them an equal chance in a struggle, to wrest out of our hands our inestimable rights and liberties civil and religious.

But you will ask, "What has all this to do "with subscription to articles of religion, and "the establishment of confessions of faith and "doctrine in protestant churches?"

Not so little as you may imagine. All religious impositions in protestant societies, not warranted by scripture, and which must be submitted to on the pain of wanting bread, have a tendency to lessen the apprehensions, that they who have so much at stake as British subjects have, ought to entertain of the encroachments of popery. Men of liberal education, finding they cannot be compleatly qualified for certain public stations, without complying with terms, of the rectitude of which they are not satisfied, and with which they must comply or lose the expence as well as the fruits of their education, will naturally be loth to forego the means of their subsistence for a scruple which is not countenanced by one example in a thousand, and will therefore comply at all events. They will be apt to suspect, that

a free examination into the merits of the case might leave impressions, which would either disappoint their prospects in life, or, in case of compliance, bring upon them anxieties that would embitter every emolument arising from their profession. What wonder that, in these circumstances, they should take up with the first flimsy casuistry suggested to them by a fellow-feeling brother? or, which is the shorter cut, and by far the most current anodyne, repose themselves in the authority of the church?

In either case, they are in a train which would lead them with equal security to acquiesce in the genuine impositions of popery. The cases only differ in the degrees of more and less: and they of course must be tender in asserting the privileges of christian liberty, on the peril of being mortified with recriminations, which the reproof of their own hearts would force them to apply, not without painful sensations. Nor is there any alternative, but a state of profligate secularity, disposing men to seek affluence, power, and dignity at any rate, and by any means that will give them the speediest possession; and with such men, popery and protestantism, the evangelists and the mass-book, are upon a level.

This is the way that some people have of accounting for the omission of the *master argument* against popery, in those few and superficial discourses on the subject, which are now-a-days heard from the pulpit.

It can never be for the interest of a free state to have men under this kind of distress in any

public office; much less those who are callous, and perfectly proof against such feelings. It may be for the interest of a church to have a hank of this kind upon the clergy; but it must be the interest of a church, with which it is not for the interest of a free protestant state to cultivate an *alliance*.

THE CONFESSIONAL.

CHAP. I.

A summary View of the Rise, Progress, and Success, of established Confessions of Faith and Doctrine of Protestant Churches.

WHEN the protestants first withdrew from the communion of the Church of Rome, the principles they went upon were such as these:

"JESUS CHRIST hath, by his gospel, called "all men unto liberty, the glorious liberty of "the sons of God, and restored them to the "privilege of working out their own salvation "by their own understandings and endeavours. "For this work of salvation sufficient means "are afforded in the holy scriptures, without "having recourse to the doctrines and com- "mandments of men. In these scriptures all "things needful for spiritual living and man's "soul's health are mentioned and shewed.

" Consequently, faith and conscience, having " no dependence upon man's laws, are not to " be compelled by man's authority; and none " other hath the church of Rome to shew for " the spiritual dominion she claimeth. The " church of Christ is congregated by the word " of God, and not by man's law; nor are the " king's laws any farther to be obeyed, than " they agree with the law of God*."

* Theſe principles were advanced by here and there an honeſt man, and a good chriſtian, long before Luther, viz. " Canonem ſive " regulum fidei et religionis, unicum eſſe *verbum Dei* ſcripturis pro- " pheticis et apoſtolicis comprehenſum: non autem *traditiones* " *eccleſiæ*, *canones ſynodorum*, aut *ſcripta patrum*. Authoritatem " verbi, ex dignitate evangelii, ſive ipſius verbi, non ab authoritate " eccleſiæ, pendere: Licet illa miniſtra ſit et magiſtra ad fidem. " Dogmata eccleſiæ ea tantum recipienda, quæ cum verbo hoc con- " ſentiunt." *Weſſelus apud Dan. Gerdeſium, Hiſt. Reform*, vol. I. p. 45. See his article in Bayle's Dictionary. After the reformation got footing, propoſitions to the ſame effect were advanced in *theſes*, for public diſputation: " Eccleſiæ Chriſti ex Deo nata eſt; " Deum igitur audiat, alium nullum. Eccleſia Chriſti non condit " novas leges ſine Deo, ſed obſervat leges ſponſi ſui Chriſti." Gerdeſius, vol. ii. p. 301, who brings a multitude of inſtances of this principle, aſſerted by various reformers, in his very valuable hiſtory. In our own country the principle was avowed in its utmoſt extent. " The goſpel taketh not his authority of man, but of God " only; the church muſt only teach that which cometh of God, and " not man's precepts." *Philpot, apud Fox, Martyrolog.* 1656. " For we think it no true obedience unto the Queen's Highneſs " [Mary], or to any other magiſtrate ordained of God under her, " to obey in things contrary to God's word, although the ſame be " never ſo ſtraitly charged in her grace's name." *Fox, Mart. p.* 1729. I take the [otherwiſe ſuperfluous] pains of putting down theſe authorities, for the ſake of a weak brother, who, in a *ſecond* letter to the author of *The Confeſſional* alledges, that " he no where " finds, that the firſt proteſtants underſtood this *glorious liberty* to " mean a diſcharge from all human authority in matters of re- " ligion." And to ſhew that they did not ſo underſtand it, he quotes ſome paſſages of Luther and Calvin. How he hath miſuſed Calvin and Luther, on this occaſion, hath been

Private Christians being thus left at liberty, by the original principles of the reformation,

ſufficiently ſhewn by the hand of a complete maſter of the ſubject. [*Vid.* An addreſs to the writer of a ſecond letter to the Author of the Confeſſional. By the learned Dr. B. Dawſon.] But let us grant him as much as he can poſſibly demand; namely, that Luther and Calvin, and, if he will, he may add the church of England, admitted the deciſions of human authority in matters of religion. What is the conſequence? Even what the author of *The Confeſſional* imputes to them, that they departed from their *firſt* principles, and *contracted their original plan.* In the mean time, the original principle was adhered to by numbers, and was often aſſerted againſt *Luther* himſelf, in the diſputes between him and *Carolo-ſtadius, Zuinglius,* and others. *Calvin* heard ſtill more of it, particularly from *Caſtellio,* who ſcrupled not to tell him, that *too many paid greater reſpect to his authority, than to the truth—that he acted the Pope—that he perſecuted thoſe who would not ſign his confeſſion of faith—and that he denied to others the liberty which he took himſelf.* "Agedum [ſays he, to Calvin and Beza], per "Chriſti, viſcera, quæſo et oro vos miſſum me facite, et inſectari "deſinite; et mihi meam fidem fideique profeſſionem liberam re-"linquite, quemadmodum vos veſtram vobis relinqui vultis, et ego "relinquo. Néve eos qui a vobis diſſentiunt continuò a veritate "diſſentire judicate, aut pro blaſphemis habete; nam multi pii in "multas a vobis diſſentiunt." *Seb. Caſt.* Defenſ. Opuſc. p. 382. When the old Puritans were harraſſed by the biſhops in Queen Elizabeth's reign, they conſtantly had recourſe, to the original proteſtant principle, of being governed by *the word of God alone.* The biſhops pleaded againſt them the Queen's authority. The Puritans denied, and in many caſes they truly denied, that the biſhops had the Queen's authority. But, even admitting the biſhops had the royal authority for their doings, the Puritans ſtuck to their principle. "Chriſt, and not the chriſtian magiſtrate, is the head of the "church. In the commonwealth the prince maketh and repealeth "laws, as ſhe thinketh the ſafety of her eſtate, and benefit of her peo-"people, do require. But in the church there is no lawgiver but CHRIST JESUS." *Dering's* Examination, *apud* Part of a Regiſter, &c. p. 79. Is *this* the principle of ALL proteſtants NOW? If it is, I am afraid, the inevitable concluſion muſt be, that the writers of theſe three letters (for they are not all from the ſame hand) and their coadjutors in the *Anti-confeſſional* cauſe were *not* proteſtants.

to search the scriptures for the grounds of their religion, and to build their faith on this foundation only, a very moderate share of sagacity would enable the leading reformers to foresee, that diversity of opinions, concerning many points of doctrine, would be unavoidable; and that from hence frequent occasions of offence would arise among themselves, not without some advantage to the common adversary.

Whether they might not, in a good measure, have prevented any very ill consequences of this liberty, without departing from the simplicity of the scripture-plan; that is to say, whether they might not have kept the terms of communion sufficiently open for pious and reasonable christians of very different opinions to have complied with them, without abridging their christian liberty, or doing violence to their consciences, cannot now be determined. Certain it is, that such an experiment was never tried, nor perhaps ever thought of, till the distemper was gone too far to be cured.

Instead of making this experiment, the reformers, having unhappily adopted certain maxims as self-evident, namely, that "there "could be no edification in religious society "without uniformity of opinion,"—that "the true sense of scripture could be but one*," and the like, presently fell upon the expedient of preventing diversity of opinions, by contracting their original plan in agreeing with these maxims. The one sense of scripture was

* See *Mosheim's* Compend. View of Eccles. Hist. vol. II p. 1509 and *Maclaine's* note [*a*].

determined to be the sense of the primitive church, that is to say, the sense of the orthodox fathers for a certain number of centuries. From these they took their interpretations of scripture, and upon these they formed their rule of faith and doctrine, and so reduced their respective churches within the bounds of a theological system. The consequence of which was, that every opinion deviating from this system, whatever countenance or support it might have from a different sense of scripture, became a declared heresy.

Hence it comes to pass, that many protestants of very different characters and tempers, finding these encroachments on their christian liberty, and themselves not only excluded from communion with their brethren, but stigmatized with an invidious name, were provoked to separate from their leaders, and set up for themselves; which many of them did on grounds sufficiently justifiable; whilst others, whose pride, passion, and self-conceit, knew no bounds, and whom probably the most reasonable terms of communion would not have restrained, under the pretence of asserting their liberty against those dogmatical chiefs, formed themselves into sects, which afterwards made the most infamous use of it.

That some of these sects were scandals to all religion, and nuisances to all civil society, was but too visible. That they were the offspring of the reformation, was not to be denied. The doctrines which afterwards distinguished the sober and serious protestant churches were not yet made public, nor perhaps perfectly settled. They were yet only to be found in the writngs

of some private doctor, whom his brethren were at liberty to disown, or in catechisms for youth, or directories for ministers within their several departments: a concurrence of unhappy circumstances, which afforded the papists a most favourable opportunity of calumniating the whole protestant body as the maintainers of every heresy, and the abettors of every sedition, which Europe had heard of or seen in that generation.

It was to no purpose, that these hot-headed irregulars were disowned, and their doctrines reprobated, by some of those eminent doctors on whom the credit and success of the reformation seemed chiefly to depend. These might speak their own sense; but it did not appear by what authority they undertook to answer for the whole body. The nature of the case called for such apologies as these, that their defection from Rome might not fall under a general odium; and it might still be true, that all protestants thought in their hearts, that these indiscreet sectaries spoke out. A suspicion which was not a little confirmed by the leading principle of the most outrageous Anabaptists, which was expressed in the very words of Luther himself.*

These circumstances laid the protestants under a necessity of publishing to the whole world explicit confessions of their faith and doctrine, authenticated by formal attestations of the leading members of their respective

* Viz. *A Christian man is master of every thing. See Bayle's Dictionary*, art. ANABAPTISTS, rem. [A.]

churches. That of the protestant princes of Germany led the way; being solemnly tendered to the Emperor Charles V. in the diet held at Augsburgh in the year 1530. This precedent other protestant states and churches thought fit to follow on different occasions; and by this means acquitted themselves, at least among all equitable judges, of the scandal of abetting the schismatical and seditious enthusiasts, who about that time infested different countries, under the pretence of promoting reformation.

These confessions, being laid before the public with this formality, very soon became of more importance than just to serve a present turn. They were solemnly subscribed by the leading men of the several communions on whose behalf they were exhibited, as doctrines by which they would live and die; and were consequently to be defended at all events. And, therefore, to secure the reputation of their uniformity to all succeeding times, an unfeigned assent to the public confession, confirmed either by subscription or a solemn oath, became, in most of the protestant churches, an indispensable condition of qualifying their pastors for the ministry, and in some of admitting their lay-members to church communion.

But this expedient, intended to prevent division in particular societies, unhappily proved the means of embroiling different churches one with another, to a very unedifying degree. The compilers of some of these confessions, in their zeal to stigmatize the heresies of the most obnoxious sectaries, had made use of terms

which no less reprobated the doctrines of their orthodox brethren; the immediate consequence of which was, that several controversies which had arisen among the respective leaders of the reformation at the beginning, and had been partly composed, and partly suspended, in regard to their common interest, were now revived, not without much heat and bitterness.

On this incident, the papists changed their method of attack, and readily took this occasion, not only to insult the reformed in their want of unity, but to turn many doctrines to their own account, which particular men had advanced in conformity to their own confessions.*

* "The Lutherans and Calvinists," says a very competent judge, "by cherishing some errors of their respective principals, were alto-"gether hindered from rightly answering the papists." See *Phœnix*, vol. II. p. 315. At length arose the immortal Chillingworth, who disclaimed the defence of the protestant religion, as it lay in systems and confessions, and appealed to the bible only. By this means many cavils were cut off at once, and many confessions of systematical doctors rendered of no use to the papists at all; who, being well aware of the advantages the popish cause would lose by this expedient, were accordingly extremely provoked at it. They called it a novelty which the protestants in general would not approve. And it appeared, in the event, that they were not totally mistaken. For the application of this rule by a liberal-spirited English prelate on a certain occasion, put another English prelate [bishop Hare] extremely out of humour: a prelate who, when the force of episcopal prejudice was out of the way, had ridiculed systematical attachments in a much-admired irony, which however owed all its beauty and all its force to this very principle of Chillingworth. Mr. *Desmaizeaux* (Chillingworth's biographer) thought it necessary to exculpate Chillingworth from this popish charge of novelty, and, as it seems to me, has succeeded very ill. He says, "all protestants "had declared in their confessions, or articles of religion, that the "scriptures are the only rule of faith by which those confessions "themselves are to be tried." But the question was not, tht all protestants had declared, but whether any protestant church had

Against these objections the protestants had a variety of defences, some of which, it must be owned, had more strength as they were applied to the papists, than merit in themselves. They said, that "a want of unity was no "greater reproach to them from the papists, "than it was to the primitive church from the "Jews and heathens, and that the same apo-"logies would serve in both cases." They might have added, that divisions in the christian church had been for the most part occasioned and fomented by the peremptory decisions and intolerant spirit of those particular doctors who happened to have the lead for the time being. But this, being too much the case of the protestants themselves, was not to be insisted on. Some advantage indeed they had in the way of recrimination: but here the papists found the means to parry the blow; alledging (what indeed was very true) that the most considerable of the points in dispute among them had never been decided *e cathedra*, and so were left open to amicable debate without breach of unity; whereas the doctrines controverted among protestants were solemnly established in their several confessions, and the confessions themselves ratified by oaths, subscriptions, &c. and the belief of them thereby made an indispensable condition of communion.*

acted conformably to that declaration, and ventured to defend the proteſtant religion on ſcripture-principles, even at the expence (if ſo it ſhould fall out) of its own eſtabliſhed confeſſion? His anſwer to biſhop Hare's peeviſhneſs is much better. *Life of Mr. Chillingworth*, p. 169, and 198.

* Thus, with reſpect to the famous five points concerning which the ſynod of Dort was ſo untractable, the diſputes in the church of

After much mortifying litigation concerning this want of unity among protestants, it so happened, that the Belgic and Gallican churches, in the name of themselves and their orthodox sister churches, thought fit to deny the fact; and, in the year 1581, exhibited what they called an *Harmony of the Confessions* of no less than eleven protestant churches, which they intended as an ample testimony of the unanimity of protestants in their principal doctrines, and a full and satisfactory confutation of the popish calumnies on this head.

This work, however, was not equally approved of by all the churches whose confessions it harmonized. It was even affronted by the church of England:* for, being translated into english in the year 1586, archbishop Whitgift (who at that time had the controul of the press) would not allow it to be printed in London, and employed his authority likewise to have it suppressed in other places.†

Rome were bitter enough; but then "the council of Trent had "drawn up her decrees, on these heads, with a neutrality which "pleased all, and disobliged none." *Heylin's Quinquarticular Hist.* p. 26. Grotius made use of this circumstance in pleading with the magistrates of Amsterdam for a toleration of the Remonstrants. "The doctrines disputed in Holland," said he, "have "not been decided by the church of Rome, though she is extremely "fond of decisions." *Abridgement of Brandt's History of the Reformation, &c. by La Roche*, p. 344.

* The English confession, exhibited in this Harmony, consisted of extracts from bishop Jewell's Apology; a book, in those days, of equal authority with our thirty-nine articles. *Strype's Annals, vol. I. chap. xxv—xxvii.* and Life of *Parker*, p. 179.

† The Harmony was, however, printed at Cambridge that year, notwithstanding Whitgift's express prohibition. Strype, u. s. vol. III. b. ii. ch. 8.—Mr. Strype has not informed us why the archbishop disallowed the Harmony: but the Belgic and Gallican

There were, indeed, some considerations naturally suggested by the manner in which this work was executed, that would greatly obstruct the good effects expected from it, whether with respect to composing differences among protestants, or obviating the reproaches of the common adversary.

1. In the first place, the compilers made no mention of the confessions or doctrines of any protestants, who dissented from the public forms, in those countries where the reformed religion had gained an establishment. They were indeed hardly charitable to such dissenters; censuring with particular severity the authors of the book of *Concord*, which had appeared about this time.*

churches having expreſſed notions of church-government, ceremonies &c. in ſome ſhort obſervations at the end of the book, not very favourable to Whitgift's principles, his grace's diſtaſte for the work is not wholly unaccountable.

* And indeed not without reaſon, if theſe cenſures could have been paſſed conſiſtently with their deſign of exemplifying the harmony ſubſiſting among proteſtants. By this book of *Concord* (the work of ſome rigid Lutherans) all thoſe churches were excluded from chriſtian communion, who would not ſubſcribe it. For which ſchiſmatical preſumption, the reformed divines of the low-countries expoſtulated ſharply with theſe authors, alledging the ſcandal and miſchief of ſuch peremptory deciſions, ſeeing that the Lutherans and Calviniſts differed only about two articles, the Lord's ſupper, and the two natures of Chriſt. Blondel indeed obſerves, "that they "differed about two articles more, viz. predeſtination and grace; "yet, believing theſe to be of no importance, they [the low-country "divines] made no mention of them." *La Roche, u. ſ. p.* 197. Would theſe divines have believed a prophet who ſhould have foretold, that their ſucceſſors, in the ſpace of forty years, would certainly treat all who differed from them in theſe two articles of *no importance*, juſt as the authors of the Concord had treated themſelves for differing with them on the other two? Mr. La Roche has given a pretty long extract of this remonſtrance of the low-country divines, and ſays, *he inſerts it with pleaſure, becauſe it is very glorious to*

2. All the world knew very well, that not one of these eleven churches would allow any man to minister in it, and hardly perhaps to communicate with it, who should refuse to subscribe the confession of that church, even though he should offer to subscribe or swear to every other system in the collection.

3. The *short observations* at the end of the Harmony, the design of which appears to have been to accommodate the awkward expressions in some of these confessions to the orthodox sense of the Belgic and Gallican churches, (a liberty which the harmonizers seem to have taken without any sort of commission,) plainly shew, that some of these churches were at too great a distance from each other, to be reconciled by any such equivocal expedients.

If the reader would know what was the reputation of these public confessions in other respects, he may be referred to a lamentation which appeared about thirty years after the publication of this Harmony; setting forth, "That these confessions were read by few; "that they were hardly to be found in book-"sellers shops; that men rather chose to pro-"vide themselves with the writings of private "doctors, and to determine religious matters "by any other testimonies, rather than these "public forms."

This complaint is taken from the preface to the *Corpus Confessionum*, printed at Geneva, 1612; the design of which work was, to re-

those divines. But to have perfectly achieved this glory for them, he should have suppressed his account of their persecuting *Hubert Duisshuis*, because he and his party refused to subscribe *their* book of *Concord.* See p. 194. 203. 297.

vive the credit of these established formalities, and to recommend them as "authentic tables "and standards of the old and primitive "faith." For this purpose the confessions of sixteen different churches are here exhibited (not in detached and selected portions, as in the *Harmony*, but) whole and entire, as they were published and acknowledged by the churches to which they respectively belonged.*

But, though the professed design of this body of confessions was to accommodate divines and students in theology with a commodious and comprehensive view of the whole doctrine of the reformed churches, yet was not the expedient of harmonizing their several confessions quite overlooked. But finding, it is likely, that the method taken in the old Harmony was justly exceptionable, these editors contented themselves with referring their readers to a kind of Synopsis, where the agreement or harmony of particular churches on different articles is exhibited, without attempting to reconcile them on those articles concerning which they did not appear to be unanimous.

In this Synopsis two things are more especially remarkable:

* This, however, the famous Peter Heylin, disputing for his doctor's degree at Oxford, 1633, denied to be true; alledging on the part of the church of England, that the first clause of her xxth. article, concerning church authority, was, in this collection, feloniously secreted; appealing to another edition of the articles, which was on that occasion fetched from a neighbouring bookseller's, and in which the aforesaid clause stood fair and legible. *Vernon's Life of Heylin*, p. 58—61.——See the editors of the *Corpus Confessionum* well vindicated, in *an Historical and Critical Essay on the thirty-nine articles*, &c. printed for Franklin, 1724, Introduction, p. 22.

1. On the article of justification and faith, which is the 5th in this index, the editors observe, that "All the confessions of the [protestant] churches teach this primary article "of the christian religion with a most holy "consent."* Does not this note (with which this article alone is honoured) seem to imply a consciousness in the editors, that this was the single article in which all these confessions did agree?

2. According to this Synopsis, there is a dead silence in many (sometimes in the majority) of these confessions, concerning some of the fundamental articles of the christian religion. Thus only six of them are referred to as speaking of the *providence of God*, in which number (I am loth to observe it) the English confession is not reckoned for one; though both Jewell's Apology and the thirty-nine Articles are inserted in this collection.†

* This fact, however, has been lately denied by a vehement advocate for confessions and subscriptions. "The doctrine of justifica-"tion," says he, "is explained with much greater nicety in the "French Confession (Article 18th) than it is in ours (Art. 11.) "and with such nicety, as occasioned a long dispute between the "French and some German divines, of whom *Piscator* was one." *Church of England vindicated in requiring subscription*, &c. p. 52. But in truth these disputes were of much longer standing. "Osiander, in his confutation of the book which Melancthon wrote "against him, observes, that there are twenty several opinions con-"cerning justification, all drawn from the scriptures, by the men "only of the Augustan confession." Bp. *Taylor*, *Lib. Proph.* p. 80.

† So that a certain right reverend prelate, when he said "that "the political system has nothing but the providence of government "to sustain it against its own madness, from falling into anarchy," did not contradict any article or confession of the church of England. Whether he contradicted any thing else, is another question. See the bishop of Glocester's sermon before the house of Lords, Jan. 30, 1760.

Again, *eleven* of these *sixteen* confessions take no notice of *the resurrection of the dead.* I mention these omissions for the sake of those gentlemen, who would have it believed, that churches cannot be sure of the orthodoxy of their ministers in the most important points of the christian religion, without obliging them to subscribe to their established confessions.* How many excellent ministers have there been in different protestant churches, who never gave those churches any security by way of subscription, that they believed either *a resurrection of the dead,* or *the providence of God?*

It is not at all necessary to carry this disquisition any farther. How particular churches in subsequent times have been embroiled on account of their established confessions, is well known. In some of these churches the inconveniences of insisting on these tests of orthodoxy have been so great, that they have found it the wisest way either intirely to drop them, or to content themselves with some general declaration, or promise from the minister, that he will not openly oppose them. In some churches a formal subscription is still required, even where the inconveniences of it have been no less, and where the most serious, conscientious, and useful ministers, are still groaning under the burden of such subscriptions. It is chiefly for the sake of such as these, that this disquisition is undertaken, if by any means our present governors (who, if they had had the original work of reformation in their hands, together with the light and ex-

* See Dr. Stebbing's Rational Enquiry into the proper methods of supporting christianity.

perience which the present and past ages have afforded, would, it may be presumed, not have imposed it) may be prevailed with to remove *a yoke which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear.**

But to proceed. Upon this short view of the tendency and effects of established confessions in protestant churches, the following reflections seem to be very natural.

1. It was a great misfortune to the protestants, that their confessions should abound with explications of so many minute points of scholastic theology, which, without stopping one popish mouth, with respect to the general accusation of heresy, tended so manifestly to narrow their original foundation, and to give their common adversaries so great an advantage, by rendering their breaches among themselves, occasioned by these explications, utterly irreconcileable.

2. It was a greater misfortune still, that they should think of establishing these explications as tests of orthodoxy, by requiring their ministers to swear to them, or subscribe them, as an indispensable condition of admitting them to the pastoral office. Had they been contented with a solemn declaration on the part of teachers and pastors, "that they received the "scriptures as the word of God, and would "instruct the people out of those *only*,"† lea-

* This was written in the year 1755.

† The learned professor Rutherforth seems to apprehend, that "a "general profession of believing whatever is contained in the scrip- "ture, or of adhering to the doctrine of the apostles, was not *likely* "to satisfy Timothy or Titus, that they who made it, *held fast the* "*faithful word as they had been taught, the mystery of faith in a*

ving them at liberty to disown whatever, after proper examination, they judged inconsistent

" *pure conſcience.*" Charge, p. 7, 8. But this is a caſe of too great conſequence to be determined by *likelihoods*, which may be juſt as well grounded on the one ſide as on the other; and the learned profeſſor does nothing for his cauſe, unleſs he can prove that Timothy and Titus were actually diſſatisfied with ſuch general profeſſion. In the mean time, has he conſidered, whither, as he ſtates the caſe, this *likelihood* would lead him? For what is the point concerning which Timothy and Titus would want to be ſatisfied? It is, according to the profeſſor, that the miniſters they appointed, " *held the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience.* But what could ſatisfy Timothy or Titus of this, leſs than a perfect inſight into the ſincerity of thoſe who made the profeſſion? Now, allowing Timothy and Titus to have had the gift of diſcerning the hearts and conſciences of particular perſons for this purpoſe, how would the learned profeſſor prove, that church governors of the preſent times are endowed with the ſame gift? I do not indeed think it at all neceſſary to ſuppoſe that Timothy and Titus had a perfect diſcernment of the hearts and conſciences of thoſe whom they admitted to the miniſtry. I do not think it neceſſary to ſuppoſe that St. Paul himſelf had this gift in ſuch perfection, as to be able at all times to know what was in the men whom he himſelf ordained. At leaſt there is no appearance in ſcripture that he had a perfect aſſurance beforehand of the ſincerity and good conſcience of *all* whom he ordained to the miniſtry. And hence I conclude, that it is likely the learned profeſſor may be under ſome miſapprehenſion, with reſpect to the points wherein he ſuppoſes Timothy and Titus would want ſatisfaction. But here I ſhall expect to be told, that " the leſs the apoſtles and " their immediate ſucceſſors are ſuppoſed to be gifted as above, the " more occaſion they would have to be ſatisfied of the ſincerity and " pure conſcience of candidates for the miniſtry ſome other way, and " (what is ſtill more to the profeſſor's purpoſe) the more muſt the " preſent governors of the church be ſuppoſed to be upon a level " with Paul and Timothy, and Titus, in this part of their office." Now ſuppoſe all this to be granted, it will ſtill be incumbent upon the learned profeſſor to ſhew, that the other way that Timothy and Titus took to ſatisfy themſelves of the ſincerity and pure conſcience of the candidates they admitted, was to amplify and ſplit the apoſtolic confeſſion expreſſed in general terms, into particular propoſitions, and to require from the ſaid candidates a ſubſcription or declaration

with them; in all human probability the interests of popery would have declined more visibly, and the true ends of reformation have been more speedily, as well as more effectually, promoted.

But, after all, they who are extremely out of temper with the first reformers, for their mistaken and unseasonable zeal in thus pre-

of assent to this amplification. For this, according to the learned Vindicator, is what the present governors of the church pretend they have a right to require, and that too for the purpose abovementioned. For the learned Vindicator tells us, p. 11, that "the governors of the "church have a right to examine into, and ascertain the faith and "doctrines of the candidates for the office of public teaching." But to ascertain the faith and doctrines of any man is impossible, unless you can, at the same time, ascertain his sincerity in professing them. Is this then one of the general benefits of establishing confessions, to give church governors an insight into the consciences, and to enable them to ascertain the sincerity, of the subscribers? Is this method of sifting the conscience always to be depended upon? And are not another sort of confessions, called auricular, much more beneficial for this purpose? And is it likely the governors of our own church will thank the learned professor for vindicating to them the exercise of so presumptuous, and, at the same time, so useless a right? Much less is it likely that nothing else would have satisfied Timothy and Titus; at least it is not likely they should take the professor's method of obtaining this satisfaction, unless it is likely that they had not the common sense to know, that he who was insincere in professing his faith in the general doctrine of the apostles, might be equally insincere in professing his faith, when amplified in a variety of dogmatical propositions. As to the learned professor's instances by which he would establish the likelihood of what would or would not satisfy Timothy and Titus, I must confess I cannot find out how he would apply them, unless he means to build his first likelihood on two more; viz. 1. The likelihood that St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans by way of confession, to be subscribed, or otherwise assented to, by the candidates ordained by Timothy and Titus. And, 2. The likelihood that the epistle to the Romans might be wrested before it was written. [*Concerning the respective dates of the epistle to the Romans, and of the first epistle to Timothy, see the learned and accurate Dr. Lardner's Supplement, &c. vol. II.*]

scribing religious opinions to their fellow-christians without sufficient warrant of scripture, would do well to consider in what situation they were.

Many abuses in popery laid open to the observation of men of all sorts. But it could hardly be credited of a sudden, by men of any sort, that the greatest part of that astonishing structure called THE CHURCH, which pretended to have for its foundation the Apostles and Prophets, and Christ himself for its corner stone, should be a mere heap of antichristian rubbish. It is, therefore, no wonder that the most enlightened of our first protestant fathers should be afraid of demolishing too much. It was visible, with what props and supports the most eminent saints and doctors of former ages had accommodated the edifice. And these, it might well be imagined, would hardly have been placed there by such venerable hands, without some good reason, and apparent necessity. In those days, nothing was thought to be sufficiently confirmed by scripture-testimonies, without additional vouchers from the ancient worthies of the church: and accordingly *Tertullian*, *Chrysostom*, *Austin*, and *Jerome*, regularly took their places on the same bench of judgment with *Paul*, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*.*

In process of time some particular persons began to see into this mistake. In our own country, the learned Cartwright, in his dispute with archbishop Whitgift, about the year

* See the *Catholicus Veterum Consensus*, at the End of the *Corpus Confessionum*.

1573, took the courage to appeal from the authority of the fathers, and to prescribe them narrower limits in the province of determining religious controversies. How this would be received in those days, might easily be conjectured without particular information. The terms in which Cartwright had characterised these venerable doctors, were collected together in a book of Bancroft's, and set off with tragical exclamations, as if they had been little less than so much blasphemy.*

Some few years after this, *Erasmus Johannes*, a schoolmaster at Antwerp, took still greater liberties with antiquity. "He affirmed, that all the councils which had met, and all the books of the fathers which had been written since the death of the Apostles, were infected with anti-christian errors, not excepting the famous council of Nice." He proposed, therefore, that, in order to a perfect reformation, the new phrases, and new ways of speaking, invented by the fathers, should be wholly suppressed and laid aside, and all religious propositions expressed according to the simplicity of Christ and his Apostles. "If any man," says he, "finds himself obliged to use new terms to express the articles of his faith, so that the words of the Prophets and Apostles are not sufficient for him, that man's doctrines and religion are certainly new, as well as his terms: for otherwise he would easily find, in the scripture, language proper enough to express his notions.†" But

* Strype's Life of Whitgift, p. 51.
† La Roche, Abridgement, vol. I. p. 218.

the times were not yet ripe for the toleration of these sentiments ; and the poor man, who was hardy enough to venture them with the public, was obliged to fly his country.

From these days, the authority of the fathers hath continued gradually to decline among all reasonable and consistent protestants, and more particularly since the publication of Mr. Daille's famous book, *De Usu Patrum*, in 1631. But none, that I know of, ventured so far as the schoolmaster of Antwerp, till, about thirty years ago, an eminent prelate of our own church advanced pretty much the same doctrine, concerning the explication of points of faith, by new and unscriptural phrases ; for which his lordship underwent the discipline of several orthodox pens ;* but without any loss of reputation among those who considered things with less prejudice. For, when it was seen that his lordship had reduced his antagonists to the disagreeable necessity of holding, that "*new* and *unscriptural* "words would better fix the sense of scripture "doctrine, than the words of Christ and his "Apostles," the clamour subsided.† Rea-

* See Dr. Stebbing's Rational Enquiry, p. 25.

† Do not they [fays Dr. Rutherforth, Charge, p. 10.] who "object this to us, [viz. the pretence that new and unfcriptural "words will better fix the fenfe of fcripture doctrine, than the words "of Chrift and his apoftles]—Do not they hold, that paftors and "teachers, by familiar, clear, and ufual forms of fpeech, can make "the fenfe of fcripture more plain to their hearers, than if they "were to read it to them in the words which Chrift and his apoftles "made ufe of? They muft, if they think otherwife, maintain, that "all preaching and interpreting of the fcriptures is entirely ufelefs, "and that the public teachers in proteftant churches have nothing "elfe to do for the inftruction of their congregations, but to read the "bible to them." Truly, Mr. Profeffor, neither *thus* nor *fo*, as any

sonable men began to see the inconvenience of adopting a principle, which would go near to

one may be satisfied who will take the trouble to read the 39th, 40th and 41st pages of the first edition of the Confessional, to the last of which only you refer; and even in that you might have seen enough to have saved you the trouble of proposing your alternative. However, it should seem as if the particulars in that page had not been altogether without their effect upon the learned professor. For "he "does not mean from the utility of preaching or interpreting the "scriptures in christian assemblies, to infer the utility of established "confessions." Why not, if his alternative is rightly stated? But rightly stated it cannot be, unless the cases are *exactly similar*, and that probably he might learn, from that part of the *Confessional* he refers to, was by no means the fact. Well, but what is it he does mean? Why, "to remind the opposers of such confessions, that "what they hold in one case is *exactly similar* to what they imagine "would bring an odium upon us if we were to say it in the other." Pray, Mr. Professor, do you know any opposers of established confessions who hold that "new and unscriptural words used by preachers "in their popular discourses, will *better* fix the sense of scripture "doctrine, than the words of Christ and his apostles?" Do you know any such opposers who hold, that "new and unscriptural "words used in such popular discourses" will fix the sense of scripture doctrine at all? or is either of these propositions in the first member of your alternative? If not, what they hold is not *exactly similar* to what, they say, you hold. And if you really do hold it, the odium still remains with you. For it is to little purpose to say, "If the sense of scripture may be expressed "more plainly, why not more precisely, than in the words of Christ "and his apostles." The contrast is not between the words plainly and precisely, but between the words expressed and fixed. Their difference with you is occasioned by your pretending to fix the sense of scripture by new and unscriptural words in an established confession, to the exclusion of the right of private judgment, and not by your endeavouring to make the sense of scripture either more plain or more precise in a popular discourse, which precludes no man from rejecting the preacher's sense, if his own judgment leads him to another. And indeed after all this twisting these poor opposers in a dilemma, thus the learned professor appears to understand them; for towards the end of the paragraph (p. 11.) he finds it convenient to say, that "what are called new and unscriptural words and ex- "pressions are introduced [into confessions], not to fix the sense of "scripture-doctrines, but to fix the sense in which scripture-expres-

justify the worst impositions of popery; and the practice of requiring subscription to human explications of christian doctrine, is now considered and treated, by many different sorts of sensible writers, as an unwarrantable incroachment on christian liberty; from which, there is reason to believe, all who are capable and willing to examine the subject *without partiality and without hypocrisy*, heartily desire an happy deliverance.

Upon this state of the case, it appears, that the matter of complaint does not affect the fathers of our reformation by far so much as their sons and successors. Our first reformers were beset with their own and other men's prejudices, to a degree that rendered them, in a great measure, incapable of conviction. It was next to impossible to convince them, that their established confessions of faith were unchristian impositions, for which there was no just authority, when they had the early practice of the christian church to appeal to, long before the tyrannical spirit of Rome prevailed. Their veneration for antiquity prevented their seeing that these very precedents were some of the steps by which the papal power ascended to its height, and arrived at the plenitude of its usurpation.

But, since it has been made appear, that some of the fathers who lived nearest to the

" fions are [rather, must be] understood by those who are candidates " for the office of public teaching." Of which unmeaning distinction he hath heard so much from one of these *perverse opposers*, that it cannot be very pleasant to him to be reminded of it any more. See, *An Examination of Dr. Rutherforth's Vindication*, &c. p. 29.

times of the Apostles, were greatly mistaken in the sense they put upon some scriptures, with respect to points of no small importance, we have reason to hope, that our superiors will no longer bind either themselves or us to an implicit acquiescence in an authority, which may occasionally be extremely inconsistent with our original obligations as christians, as well as with the distinguishing principles of our profession as protestants. Whatever expedients of peace and order their own sort of prudence, or the exigencies of the times they lived in, might suggest to these venerable fathers, they certainly had no right to prescribe articles of faith to us. And should either they themselves, or any others in their name, pretend to it, we beg leave to remind them of a capital maxim, to the truth of which the fathers themselves have occasionally borne their testimony, namely, *The scriptures of the old and new Testament contain all things necessary to salvation, and are the sole ground of the faith of a christian.**

Upon this principle, all imposed subscriptions to articles of faith, and religious doctrines, conceived in unscriptural terms, and inforced by human authority, are utterly unwarrantable, and not to be defended but by arguments and pretences, highly dishonourable to the sacred writings, and, in many cases, contradictory to the express contents of them.

* For a compendious view of the testimony of the Fathers to *the sufficiency of the holy scriptures as a rule of religion*, the reader may consult a book intitled, *The Divine Oracles*, written by the learned and candid Mr. *John Brekell*, printed for *Waugh*, &c. 1749.

But, forasmuch as there never yet was any instance of a prosperous usurpation destitute of advocates to lay in for it a claim of right and justice, it would be strange if this matter of subscription, wherein such large and opulent bodies of men are interested, should be left to shift for itself. What the orators of the church have offered on this behalf, we shall now briefly consider.

CHAP. II.

The Claim of a Right to establish Confessions as Tests of Orthodoxy in Protestant Churches, briefly considered.

THE fundamental position, on which the authority of established confessions in protestant communions depends, is this; "Every particular church, considered as a "society, has a right, as other societies "have, to secure its own peace and welfare, "by all lawful means; and consequently, to "prescribe such terms of communion as appear "to be most expedient for the purpose; pro- "vided that nothing be required, under this "pretence, which is contrary to the word of "God, or inconsistent with the liberty of "other churches."

To this it has been answered in short, "That, "by admitting the principle of self-defence "and self-preservation in matters of religion, "all the persecutions of the heathens against "the christians, and even the popish inquisi- "tion, may be justified."* If the church of England, for example, has a right to fix her own terms of communion, and in consequence of that, to secure the obedience of her members by temporal rewards and penalties; the church of Portugal must, upon the same principles, have an equal right to secure herself by the discipline of an holy office, or how otherwise she thinks proper.†

* See Bishop Hoadly's speech for the Repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, in Tindal's Continuation of Rapin Thoyras, 8vo. vol. xxvii. p. 237.

† "I am as ready to allow," says Dr. Rutherforth, "as any

The proviso, that "church-ordinances be a-"greeable to the word of God," will not in the present case help the protestant churches at all. Established confessions, being human compositions, must either be subject to examination by the private judgment of those who

"man can be to contend, that temporal rewards and punishments— "are not the proper means for promoting true religion;" referring to *Confessional*, p. 22. 23. of the first edition. But who thanks him for this concession? The question here is not concerning the means of promoting true religion, but concerning the means of fixing the terms of communion, and securing obedience to those terms in a particular church. The Doctor tells us, that, "legal emoluments are "indeed temporal rewards—but that they are only rewards for doing "the work of the ministry," p. 3. But then it is only for doing the work of the ministry in one particular mode, prescribed by the particular church or church-governors where the minister does the work. Whoever does the work of the ministry in any other way, is not intitled to the legal reward. In this light the rewards are plainly the means of fixing the terms of communion in the particular churches here mentioned, and of securing the obedience of the members of those churches so rewarded, to the terms so fixed. And the question here is not concerning the propriety of those means for those particular ends, but concerning the right that particular churches or church-governors have, to fix the terms of communion by such means. If the doctor will prove the right, we will not dispute with him the propriety of promoting temporal ends by temporal means. On the other hand, if the doctor will allow that church-governors have no right to fix the terms of communion by temporal rewards and punishments, he will tender us something worth our acceptance, and will save us the trouble of inquiring how true religion is promoted by sending honest and conscientious men, who cannot comply with the terms of doing the work, to get their livelihood in some other way. But here the doctor hath taken care to guard his concession against any such mistake. "Temporal rewards," says he, "are therefore such means, "as the governors of the church have no right to make use of for the "attainment of THAT END, to which the society wherein they pre-"side, and the office which they bear in it, are ULTIMATELY re-"ferred." Which hinders not, but that church governors may have a right to make use of such means, for intermediate ends, to which the society and the office are *not ultimately* referred.

profess (as all protestants do) to make the written word their only rule of religion; or else the church must claim a right of interpreting the scriptures for all her members, exclusive of the right of private judgment.* The

* The late bishop Conybeare, in his famous Subscription-Sermon, argues from the consent required by the apostles to their doctrines, to the consent required by succeeding church governors to human articles. This fallacy has been too apt to pass without examination; but the supposition upon which it is supported, is indeed neither more nor less than this: "Scripture truths and the church's explications "stand upon the same authority." This will readily appear, by taking a short account of Bishop Conybeare's foundation, and what he builds upon it. His first head of inquiry is, "What right or "power the church hath to demand such subscriptions," namely, such subscriptions as are demanded to the thirty nine articles of the church of England. "For the better decision of this question," he tells us, "we are to consider the church, not barely as a number of persons, "who profess a belief in Jesus Christ as the promised Messias, but "as a religious body or society of men, who are united under Christ "the supreme governor, as well as founder of this society. Thus is "it," adds the bishop, "constantly represented in the New Testa-"ment." p. 11. Now this representation in the New Testament, is of a church or churches formed under the supreme governor Jesus Christ, by the ministry of his apostles, who indeed required, as appears by the bishop's text, [1 Tim. vi. 3, 4.] *consent to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine, which is according to godliness*; that is, to the doctrine which they taught, and have left in the books of the New Testament. This consent they had a right and power to demand, given them by Jesus Christ himself, and they demanded no other consent. Now the bishop gives not the least hint that the church into whose right and power he proposes to inquire in his first head, is a different church from that represented in the New Testamment. Is it not therefore evident that he means to transfer the right and power of the New Testament-Church, to the church which demands such subscriptions, as those that are demanded to the thirty nine articles of the church of England! If he does not, he deserts his premises, and his subsequent reasoning is just as pertinent to the case of subscription to the articles of the Koran, as to the articles of a christian church: (for the church of Mahomet is as much a religious society as the church of England, or any other church). But this, I take it for granted, the

former of these principles manifestly precludes the right of the church to establish any thing as a condition of christian communion, without the previous consent of all her members; that is to say, of all who, without that condition, would have a right to christian communion.* The latter, indeed, vests the church with a full measure of authority to establish what she pleases; but then it is an authority which every protestant church most expressly disclaims, and condemns in the church of Rome as an impudent and groundless usurpation.

There is, indeed, nothing more evident, than that every christian hath a right to search the scriptures; a right which he cannot transfer, either to any church, or to any single person, because it is his indispensable duty to exercise it personally for himself. And if it is his duty

admirers of the bishop's way of building will not allow. The alternative is, that bishop Conybeare, in his sermon on the case of subscription to the articles of religion, "argues from the consent requir-"ed by the apostles to their doctrines, to the consent required by "succeeding church-governors to human articles." In other words, argues, that "Scripture truths, and the church's explications, stand upon the same authority."

* Honest old Rogers, by *the church which hath authority in controversies of faith*, understands not only the aggregate body, but every member of sound judgment in the same. Cath. Doct. Art. xx. Propos. 3. well knowing that every intelligent christian, with the scriptures before him, is, upon protestant principles, and in decrees of this nature, a church to himself. This leaves no room for bishop Burnet's distinction between an infallible authority, and an authority of order, which last, he faintly insinuates, might be safely entrusted with the body of the clergy. But his lordship, to do him justice, qualifies this with a proviso, that this body is properly disposed for the province.—Perhaps it might be as difficult to find such a body of men, as to find single persons without mistakes. See Bishop Burnet's Exposition, fol. p. 195.

to search, it must also be his duty to determine for himself; and, if he finds just cause, to dissent from any or all the human establishments upon earth.

Some writers on this subject discover an inclination to deny the right of private judgment in *every case* where it is opposed to church-authority. These we leave to reconcile their principles with their separation from Rome. Others attempt by various arguments (some of which will occur hereafter) to prove that the authority of the church to frame and settle confessions of faith and doctrine for all her members, is perfectly consistent with the rights of private judgment. But, to discover the fallacy of all arguments to this purpose, it is only necessary to consider, that, if this supposed authority was vigorously exerted, and applied in all cases (as it ought to be, if the authority is real,) and if, on the other hand, the people were diligent and careful in searching the scriptures, every one for himself, (as all protestants agree they ought to do) the consequence would most probably be, that the far greater part of honest and sensible christians would be excluded from the communion of every church which has an established confession.* For

* A certain writer, in the *Daily Gazetteer of Sept.* 30, 1766, pronounces, that "the author of the *Confessional* cannot, consistently "with his principles, be a member of any established church." Whether the hint was taken from this passage, or some other, is not any great matter. The question is, how far the said author is within the reach of this fulminating censure? or what the consequence must be if he falls under it? "He," says Lord Clarendon, "who will "profess all the opinions held by the most ancient fathers, and ob"serve all that was practised in the primitive times, cannot be of the "communion of any one church in the world." *Essays*, fol. 1727. p. 226. As this zealous brother in the *Gazetteer* may probably be one of those who estimate orthodoxy by an agreement with fathers

where is there one of these confessions which does not contain some very material decisions, from which an intelligent christian, who hath duly examined the scriptures, may not reasonably dissent? I had almost said, where is there one of them to which a knowing and thinking christian can assent in all points, without prostituting his understanding and conscience to the doctrines and commandments of men?—I say, a *knowing* and *thinking* christian; for he must have considered the case before us very superficially, who does not perceive, that the adherence of such numbers to the peculiar doctrines of the church from which they receive their denomination, and even to some doc-

and times, one would wish to know what abatements in profession and practice he thinks proper to make, in order to qualify himself to be a member of the established church with which he communicates? An explicit declaration on this head, by so strenuous an adherent to establishments, would be both edifying and entertaining. The author of the *Confessional*, on his part, declares, without hesitation, that he knows no fathers of the christian church more antient than the apostles of Christ, nor any times more primitive than those in which they preached and wrote. Whatsoever they taught, he professes cordially to believe; and how much soever he may be sneered for adhering to scripture-precedents, is desirous to observe whatsoever was practised in the first christian churches settled by those venerable fathers, so far as he can discover it in the scriptures. And if any established church should disown him for a member, upon account of his not believing or not practising more or less than he finds in those scriptures, he apprehends the fault will, in the event, be found, not in himself, but in the church or churches who reject one whom the apostles of Christ would not have rejected. "J'avoue que je "suis de ceux qui sont pour le christianisme apostolique, ou pour "celui qu'on peut tirer de leurs écrits, en propres termes, ou par des "consequences necessaires, lorsqu'il s'agit d'un dogme essentiel," says Mr. Le Clerc, *Bibl. Choisie*, *tom.* 21. p. 15. And so say I too; reserving to myself, however, the privilege of drawing these necessary consequences for my own use, without being obliged to trust to the logic of fathers of more modern times.

trines common to the creeds and confessions of all churches, which call themselves orthodox, is owing to their ignorance, their indolence, their secularity, or the early prejudices of education, which are known to be the unhappy circumstances of the common people, all over the christian world.

Some zealous men have, indeed, inferred a necessity for confessions, and consequently an authority in the church to establish them, from these very indispositions and incapacities of the people to examine and judge for themselves. But, though this is perhaps the best plea of right which the church has to alledge, yet wiser and cooler advocates for confessions chuse not to abide by an argument, which would equally vindicate the church of Rome with respect to many of her impositions. Not to mention, that these indispositions and incapacities in the clergy would be but an aukward reason for making their assent and subscription to confessions an indispensable condition of being admitted into the church as teachers.

These prudent gentlemen, therefore, seem inclined to acquit the laity of all concern with established confessions, and to confine their authority to the clergy; insomuch that (if I understand some of our modern casuists on this subject) a layman, if he can get over his own scruples, may pray, hear the word, and even communicate, with what protestant church he pleases.* If this be really true, we have rea-

* The opinions, indeed, of these modern divines on this article are not uniform. Many worthy ministers of several denominations, whose catholic principles would incline them to reject no man who should attend their communions with decency and reverence, may

son to be thankful for better times; for undoubtedly some of us have remembered worse.

still think themselves obliged (and very reasonably) to have respect to the sense of the congregation where they constantly officiate. Others, I know, think differently; and this occasions a variety in practice. See Whiston's *Memoirs, vol. II.* p. 485. and *Killingworth's Examination of Dr. Foster's sermon on Catholic Communion.*—"It seems to me," says Mr. La Roche, "that protestants "and catholics should not discourage those heterodox men who come "to their altars." *Abridgement*, vol. II. p. 613. And so it seems to me too, provided such heterodox men come there of choice, solely for a religious end, and behave reverently and decently when they are there. But, when Mr. La Roche adds, "the church of Eng-"land is the wisest national church in the world upon this head," he refers to a very different case, wherein indeed the wisdom of the church had no share. Most of the bishops, and among them the two archbishops Wake and Dawes, opposed the repeal of the act against occasional conformity with all their strength: an act which, all the word knows, discouraged heterodox men from coming to our altars. *Tindal's Contin*, 8vo. vol. XXVII. p. 231—241. And to admit these heterodox men to our altars, without previously revoking their wicked errors, is against our canon law to this hour. In the mean time, the *Test-Act* brings many men to our altars (and it is well if not some infidels among them), who would never come there of choice, or on a religious account. In the late altercations concerning the bill for naturalizing the Jews, mention was made of some Jews in King William's reign, who actually came to our christian altars to qualify themselves for naturalization. *Lond. Mag. for July*, 1753. p. 306. We are apt to value ourselves mightily on the respect which foreign protestants express for our church; but there are cases where this respect does us no honour. Such a compliment as this of Mr. La Roche is enough to put a sensible church-of England man, who knows the true state of the case, out of countenance. A law inducing men to profess, by a solemn act, that their religious opinions are what they really are not, is no mark either of wisdom or christian charity in any church. But this point has been so thoroughly discussed and cleared up by the late bishop of Winchester, that there is no danger it should ever be thrown into confusion again; though, more lately, some ingenious pains have been taken that way, viz. in the book of Alliance between church and state, written by another bishop.

But, however this matter might turn out upon the experiment, certain it is, that, in so far as the laity are allowed not to be bound by these church confessions, the point of right to establish them as tests of orthodoxy is fairly given up, as well for the clergy as the laity; since whatever rule is sufficient to direct the faith and practice of the layman, must likewise be sufficient to direct the teaching of the clergyman, unless the clergyman may be obliged to teach doctrines, which the layman is not obliged either to believe or to practise.*

* "As if," saith Dr. Rutherforth, "the governors of the church "becauſe they do not bind the laity to ſubſcribe to the eſtabliſhed "confeſſion, did not underſtand them to be bound in conſcience, "as much as the clergy, to believe and practiſe what is contained in "it," p. 15. And yet it ſeems, that after the governors of the church have ſet forth this confeſſion as a rule to direct the faith and practice of the laity, "they leave every man to judge and determine "for himſelf, whether it is ſuch a one as he ought to aſſent to, or "not." That is to ſay, *every layman*; for the clergyman, having already aſſented to this confeſſion, is not left thus to judge and determine for himſelf. Now as the layman is left thus to judge and determine to the end of his life, without any requiſition on the part of church governors, either to ſubſcribe or declare his aſſent to the confeſſion, how can theſe governors poſſibly underſtand that the layman is as much bound in conſcience to believe and practiſe what is contained in the confeſſion, as the clergyman who hath ſolemnly ſubſcribed, and declared his aſſent to it? In truth, the governors of the church underſtand no ſuch thing; and Dr. Rutherforth himſelf ſhall, upon this occaſion, be my voucher. For, ſtrange as it may appear, in theſe very words does he conclude the paragraph: "Of "the laity they do not require this ſubſcription; becauſe, after they "have taken care that theſe ſhould be duly inſtructed, their duty "extends no farther, and therefore gives them no right to know what "determination the private judgment of any one of this rank may have "led him to."—But it is upon this very determination, which church-governors have *no right to know*, that the obligation of the layman's conſcience depends. Whence it appears that church-governors, whoſe duty is limited as above, do not pretend to underſtand to what

" But," say some men, " if there be really " an expedience and utility in these public " formularies called confessions of faith, we " may well infer a right to establish them, al- " though concerning such right the scripture " should be silent. Many things relating to " public worship, and public edification, must " be left to the prudence and discretion of " church-governors for the time being; and " if confessions are manifestly useful and ex- " pedient for the church, there must be an " authority lodged somewhere to prepare and " inforce them."

The *expediency* and *utility* of confessions will be very particularly considered in the next chapter; for which reason I shall forbear to say any thing farther to this plea at present, save only a word or two concerning this method of arguing from the probable expedience or utility of any thing in religion, to a right or authority to employ or introduce it.

No wise man, who hath duly considered the genius and design of the christian religion, will look for much utility or expedience, where the church or church-governors go beyond their plain commission. And, whatever may be left to the prudence and discretion of church-

the layman is or is not bound in conscience with respect to their established confession; and if they understand the clergyman, upon account of his subscribing the confession, to be bound in conscience to believe and practise what is contained in it, it will follow, that " the clergyman may be obliged to teach doctrines which " the layman is not obliged either to believe or practise." For " *ex hypothesi* the established confession is the rule for the clergyman's doctrinal teaching, from which he may not depart, on the peril of being held unsound by his governors.

governors, there is so much more left to the conscience of every christian in his personal capacity, that it greatly behoves such governors to beware they incroach not on a province which is without their limits. This consideration has always disposed me to reason in a manner just contrary to these gentlemen, namely, from the authority to the utility of religious measures. My opinion is, that where the methods of promoting christianity are matter of scripture-precept, or plainly recommended by scripture precedents, there such methods should be strictly followed and adhered to, even though the expedience of them should not be very evident *a priori*.* We can have

* "When those," saith Dr. Rutherforth, "who allow that "'such methods of promoting christianity, as are plainly recommended by scripture-precedents, ought to be strictly followed,' "complain of it as an unwarrantable encroachment on christian liberty, that subscriptions should be required to be made to religious propositions expressed in any other than scripture-language, "one is apt to suspect, that by a scripture precedent they mean a precedent of a confession recorded in the scriptures, and expressed "there in unscriptural words. But without looking for such inconsistencies"—*This* method *of looking for inconsistencies*, is so very new, that I cannot readily find a class for it among the current arts of controversy. May I venture to call it a piece of *professorship*, where an aptness to suspect is a necessary part of the calling, lest the unwary moderator should be surprised into inconvenient concessions by the insidious colourings of heretical pravity, as hath sometimes been the case. The professor refers to Confessional, p. 19, 29. The thing complained of, p. 19. of the first edition, as "an unwararntable encroachment on christian liberty," is, "the practice of requiring subscriptions to human explications of christian "doctrine." Are scripture-precedents there called for to justify the practice? or are they there so much as mentioned? Nothing like it. But scripture-precedents in general happen to be recommended, at the distance of ten pages, as the safest for church-governors to follow in all cases; and why shall not a professed disputant have the privilege of tacking things together to make his own ends meet, and

no pretence of right or authority to alter such

and to fix any abſurdity upon his opponent that may ſubſerve his own argument? But, however, we have no reaſon to complain of the learned profeſſor for declining to gratify even our inconſiſtent demands, ſince he does his beſt endeavour to give us a ſcripture-precedent for requiring ſubſcription or declaration of aſſent to a confeſſion expreſſed in unſcriptural words. "But," ſays he, "without looking for ſuch inconſiſtencies, it is enough for us to find, "that St. Paul, when he commanded Timothy and Titus to examine into the faith of all thoſe whom they ſhould receive into the "miniſtry, gave them no directions to uſe only ſcripture language." Which is to ſuppoſe that, when the epiſtles to Timothy and Titus were written, the other ſcriptures of the N. T. were extant, and collected together as we now have them; otherwiſe the *no directions* of St. Paul might be owing to the want of a complete rule whereby to direct the examination of candidates. It is not enough, therefore, for the profeſſor's purpoſe to find theſe *no directions*, till he hath proved, that the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament were in the hands of Timothy and Titus in the circumſtances above mentioned. But for once let us ſuppoſe they were; and how then? Why then, "we may reaſonably conclude that Timothy and Titus were left at "liberty to propoſe their queſtions in any words that would aſcertain "their meaning." Conſidering the uſe the learned profeſſor propoſes to make of this ſcripture-precedent, I ſhould think he hath expreſſed himſelf here a little unwarily. Would he have it underſtood that Timothy and Titus were left at liberty to propoſe their queſtions in any words which would aſcertain a meaning of their own, different from the meaning of the ſcriptures, which they are ſuppoſed to have had in their hands? And would he infer from hence, that church-governors of the preſent times are left at the ſame liberty? No, I will not ſuffer myſelf to ſuſpect that the learned profeſſor, adventurous as he is, would go this length in vindication of any proteſtant church. I will, therefore, ſuppoſe this to be a ſlip of his pen; and that he meant to ſay, that Timothy and Titus were left at liberty to propoſe their queſtions in any words that would aſcertain the meaning, or, what is the ſame thing, fix the ſenſe of the ſcriptures they had in their hands. And yet I know not how far I ſhould be right in this modification of the profeſſor's expreſſion, or how far he would think fit to own it. For on the oppoſite page he tells us, "that new and unſcriptural words and expreſſions were introduced by church-gover"nors, not to fix the ſenſe (in other words, to aſcertain the mean"ing) of ſcripture-doctrines, but to fix the ſenſe—of ſomething elſe." and ſo much for inconſiſtencies.

methods for others seemingly more expedient, while so very much of the effect of religion, or, in other words, of its utility, is made by our blessed master to depend on the inward frame of every man's heart, into which ordinary church governors can have no farther discernment than other men. On this account, those means of edification, public or private, will always, in my esteem, bid the fairest for success, which are the truest copies of apostolic originals. Notions of expedience in any thing more than these, when there is nothing to judge by but superficial appearances, have frequently led men to interfere very unseasonably with the dictates of other mens consciences; and no greater mischief has ever been occasioned by any thing in the christian church, than by those very expedients of human prudence, from which the best effects have been expected.

Among other instances which might be given to verify this observation, we have one at home, in which all those who are called to the ministry are too nearly concerned not to be capable judges. After some progress had been made in the reformation of the church of England, it was thought to be a great defect, that a public confession of faith and doctrine should still be wanting.* To supply this defect, the *articles of religion* were compiled, published, and enjoined to be subscribed. These articles (with some alterations which passed in those days for improvements) are still subscribed by, at least, one hundred of our ministers every year. That above one fifth of this num-

* Burnet's Hist. Reform. vol. II. p. 166. and vol. III. p. 210.

ber do not subscribe or assent to these articles in one uniform sense, we have great reason to believe; and yet the avowed purpose of this general subscription is to prevent diversity of opinions. And indeed, considering to what sorts of men this test is made indispensable, it is, I think, as much as can be expected, if another fifth subscribe them in any sense, but the sense they have of wanting preferment in the church if they should not.

It is true, all these persons minister in the several congregations by one common form, framed, for the general, on the model of the confession they have subscribed; and so far all has a fair and honest appearance, and, while they keep their thoughts to themselves, is consistent enough. But no sooner are many of them at liberty to deliver their own or other men's sentiments from the pulpit, but the established system is laid aside, or, perhaps, if it comes in their way, quite overset,* and many things written and uttered with all freedom, by different persons, equally irreconcileable to each other, as well as to the orthodox confession.

What now is the utility or expedience in this affair of subscription, which will atone for the scandal brought upon the cause of christianity by this unscriptural article of church discipline?

* "All those who write and preach in this nation are not her "[the church of England's] sons, any more than they of Geneva, "or Scotland, or New England, are," says bishop *Ruft*, *Defence of Origen, &c. Phœnix*, vol. I. p. 83. so that this is no new complaint. See likewise Dr. Hartley's Observations on Man, vol. II. p. 354. and a remarkable instance in *a Defence of the Essay on Spirit*, p. 24.

To say nothing of the distress of many a conscientious minister under the unhappy dilemma of, subscribe or starve ;* is it possible that

* "Take away the legal emoluments of the ministry," says Dr. Rutherforth, "and though you leave subscriptions, these useful" [he should have added conscientious] "ministers, *as they are called*, "will make no complaint of their being under the dilemma of either "subscribing to our articles, or of not enjoying the liberty of preach-"ing the gospel." *Vindication*, p. 5. A most uncharitable judgment, and, as it happens, contradicted by notorious matter of fact. It is well known, that the dissenting clergy are excluded from the legal emoluments of the ministry, and are not legally at liberty to preach the gospel, but upon condition of their subscribing the major part of our articles. In the year 1719, Mr. James Pierce and Mr. Joseph Hallet, junior, of Exeter, were shut out of their pulpits, as Mr. Pierce expresses it, for refusing to subscribe the first article of the church of England. *Western Inquisition*, p. 70, 147, 148. About the same time, others of their brethren were excluded from, and some of them by, their respective congregations, for the same cause. And among these, some were obliged to betake themselves to secular employments. *Ibid.* p. 158, 159. These, and several others which happened in different places, are cases in point against Dr. Rutherforth. I have been informed upon good authority, that the late Dr. Foster never subscribed the articles, and that, when some distant attempts were made by a great churchman of those times to inforce a compliance with the toleration act upon all the dissenting clergy, he bore a noble and spirited testimony, which shewed at least that secular hopes or fears were no part of the motives upon which he exercised his ministry. I could augment this list pretty considerably, by adding others of different denominations within my own knowledge, were this a proper place for information of that kind. Far be it from me to set the usefulness of dissenters upon an equal footing with the usefulness of a learned and laborious professor in a celebrated university ; but I cannot help expressing my apprehensions, that some of the works of *Pierce*, *Hallet*, and *Foster*, will be inquired after and read with edification, long after the *Confessional* and this elaborate confutation of it are buried in oblivion. If such then is the self-denial of dissenters, who pass with us for mistaken men in the greater part of their system, shall we say, or even suppose, that legal emoluments have a stronger bias upon the more enlightened minds of the members of the establishment? or will the professor say, that none of the established clergy have any scruples about subscription at all?—"Nor," continues the learned professor,

the ignorance, the indolence, or the insincerity of the rest, should not make considerable

" is the case fairly stated in the present situation of things. Sub-" scription is no new test of our opinions, which is then first proposed " to us when we are already in the ministry, and are going to be " admitted to an ecclesiastical benefice; for we cannot be admitted " to the lowest order of ministers without it." No, Mr. Professor, nor without a competent stipend, on the peril of the candidate's being thrown on the bishop who ordains him, *for a maintenance with all things necessary, till he do prefer him to some ecclesiastical living;* Canon xxxiii. In what respect then is the case unfairly stated? " Why, they who are concerned in this dilemma should not be called " ministers." Very well, we will not stand for small matters. We will call them men; and then the state of the case will stand thus: " Many an useful, conscientious man, after having spent his time " and his fortune among doctors and professors, in fitting himself for " the ministry, finds, in the twenty-third year of his life, such con-" ditions prescribed, as he cannot in conscience comply with, and " that he is reduced to the unhappy dilemma of *subscribing at all* " *adventures, or starving.*" " No," says the professor, " he may " apply himself to some other way of getting a livelihood." But may it not be somewhat of the latest, when his money is gone, and the man himself perhaps under canonical correction for his *wicked errors.* But, courage! Things are not quite so desperate. The mere carcase of an indigent heretic in durance would not, in the present situation of things, pay the expence of a *significavit;* and the man, being left at large, must be poor indeed if he cannot purchase a spade and a pickax.—An able bodied man may always find work upon the turnpike roads. At length, indeed, the professor owns " there have been some ministers who have scrupled to repeat " the subscription, and have therefore continued without any eccle-" siastical preferment till their scruples were removed, or perhaps as long as they lived. But," adds the humane professor, " the number " has been too small for any one to pretend that it would be reason-" able for the sake of such as these to give up the general benefit pro-" posed by subscriptions." *Such as these;* that is to say, useful and conscientious ministers. For they are such as these that the *Confessional* speaks of. Shall we say then, that it is not only the smallness of the number, but the sort of men, which makes it unreasonable to give up the general benefit proposed by subscriptions? But, to have given its proper weight to his argument, the learned professor should have said " the general benefit actually obtained by sub-" scriptions." They who first required subscriptions might propose

impressions, both upon the friends and enemies of revelation? Suppose the herd of mankind were too much employed in other business to turn their attention of themselves to remarks of this nature, yet the zeal and eagerness of the litigants to expose this prevarication on either side, by casting their subscriptions in each other's teeth, will not suffer the most incurious mortal to be long uninformed of it, if he should only look into some of the commonest books of controversy for his mere amusement.

The sum of the whole matter then is this: Lodge your church authority in what hands you will, and limit it with whatever restrictions you think proper, you cannot assert to it a right of deciding in controversies of faith and doc-

a general benefit, which has never been obtained. To make us judges of this, the learned professor should have been particular in explaining in what this general benefit consists. If subscription is considered in the light of a test whereby the soundness of the candidate in faith and doctrine is ascertained, and if this be the general benefit proposed by it, I should apprehend, from the latitude allowed by other defenders of subscription, that this benefit is so far from being general, that it never can be obtained from any subscriber who takes advantage of the latitude allowed by these defenders. And they who do not take this advantage are, perhaps, still fewer in number than they who scruple to subscribe at all. Where then would be the unreasonableness of giving up what cannot be obtained, for the sake of useful and conscientious men, though ever so few? Indeed, if the general benefit of subscriptions is the letting a number of men into a way of getting a livelihood (the only obvious alternative hinted at), perhaps the general benefit proposed, and the general benefit obtained, may be nearly equal: and then the sort of men who object to subscriptions, will be out of the question. For then the equitable decision of the case will depend, not upon the reasonableness of having some regard and compassion for useful and conscientious ministers, or upon the reasonableness of the scruples which with-hold them from subscribing, but upon the reasonableness of accommodating the numbers of those who have no scruples, at the expence of those who have.

trine, or, in other words, a right to require assent to a certain sense of scripture, exclusive of other senses, without an unwarrantable interference with those rights of private judgment which are manifestly secured to every individual by the scriptural terms of christian liberty, and thereby contradicting the original principles of the protestant reformation.*

* "But can any one imagine, says Dr. Rutherforth, that Christ "and his apostles purposely delivered their doctrines in such ex- "pressions as would admit of different interpretations, that each par- "ticular person might interpret them for himself, and might, in de- "termining what his faith should be, have a variety to choose out of?" p. 12. I suppose, the learned professor will think each particular person safe enough in imagining what his church-governors have imagined before him. "Nor are these changes of sense," says the reverend Dr. Powell, "unusual even in our most solemn forms. The "passages of the psalms, or other scriptures, which make a part of "our daily devotions, cannot always be applied by every christian "as they were by the writers." *Sermon in defence of subscription*, p. 14. Here, we see, change of application, when these instances occur, implies change of sense. Whether the writers of these passages purposely delivered them in such expressions as would admit of different interpretations, I leave to be discussed by these two eminent doctors. If they did, I cannot see why each particular person should not, upon protestant principles, have as much right to choose an interpretation for himself, as his church-governors have to choose one for him. "[Nec inutile est, in re tam obscurâ atque ambiguâ, "habere multa variaque probabilia, ex quibus quod cuique propius "a vero abesse videatur, id sequi liceat." *Raphelius Xenoph. in John* xiii. 34.] If they did not, I am afraid it will follow that every christian who makes use of these solemn forms, and cannot apply the passages of scripture in them as the writers of those passages applied them, has been purposely led, by those who composed and authorized these forms, into a misapplication of scripture. But to answer the professor's question directly: nobody that I know of does imagine, that this was the design of Christ and his apostles; and what then? Why then, "the terms which secure to each christian the "right of interpreting them [the discourses or writings of Christ and "his apostles] for himself, cannot without impropriety be called the "scriptural terms of christian liberty: they should rather be called "the terms of an accidental liberty, which belongs to christians in

This point being settled, the squabbles among particular churches concerning their supposed

"their preſent ſituation." And ſo all this parade of objection ends in an *impropriety!* and well it is no worſe. However, if it is an impropriety, the author of the Confeſſional was led into it by an authority equal at leaſt to that of Dr. Rutherforth, even the authority of the great Chillingworth, whoſe words are theſe: "This vain conceit that we can ſpeak of the things of God better than in the "words of God; this deifying our own interpretations, and forcing "them upon others; this reſtraining the word of God from that latitude and generality, and the underſtandings of men from THAT "LIBERTY WHEREIN CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES LEFT "THEM, is and hath been the only fountain of all the ſchiſms in the "church, and is that which makes them immortal." *Chap.* iv. *ſect.* 16. The profeſſor, however, having left this ſmall cavil to take its chance, returns to the true queſtion, "whether this liberty is not unwarrantably interfered with, by requiring chriſtians to aſſent to "any certain ſenſe of ſcripture, where they are perſuaded it will "admit of other ſenſes, and have a right to judge for themſelves "which is the true one? The anſwer, ſays the profeſſor, is obvious. No chriſtian is required to ſubſcribe to ſuch confeſſions as I "am ſpeaking of, who is not in his own private judgment convinced "that they are agreeable to the word of God." p. 13. I would not willingly ſuſpect the learned profeſſor of attempting to evade the force of the queſtion, under the cover of the word ſubſcribe. The term in the queſtion is aſſent; and if it is not required of thoſe chriſtians, who are not required to ſubſcribe, to aſſent to the confeſſion, how can the governors of the church poſſibly underſtand thoſe chriſtians who do not ſubſcribe the confeſſion, to be bound in conſcience to believe what is contained in it, as much as they who do ſubſcribe it, as the profeſſor aſſerts in the very next page? Can any man be underſtood to be bound in conſcience to believe a propoſition, to which he is not required to aſſent? Well, but there are chriſtians of a certain claſs, who are required both to aſſent and ſubſcribe to a certain ſenſe of ſcripture expreſſed in ſuch confeſſions as the profeſſor is ſpeaking of. What right have church governors to interfere with the private judgment of theſe, any more than with the private judgment of any other chriſtians? The profeſſor anſwers, "theſe "confeſſions are deſigned to be teſts by which the governors of the "church may find out, whether they who deſire to be appointed "paſtors and teachers, aſſent to the faith and doctrines contained in "them or not." p. 13. But what is all this to the point of right thus to interfere? where is the warrant of theſe church-governors

liberty within their respective departments (in so far as these confessions come in question) is about a thing of nought. For, none of them having a right to establish or to prescribe such doctrinal confessions for the whole body, it is matter of great indifference (setting aside the scandal of it) in what degree they exclude or make room for one another.

But, to give this matter a little consideration with respect to the present effects of it upon christian societies, let us suppose that protestant churches *have* such a right, each within its own confines. The question is, how shall one church exercise this right, without encroaching on the right of another? Upon the genuine grounds of separation from the church of Rome, all particular churches are co-ordinate;*

to find this out? If the faith and doctrines contained in these confessions are different from the faith and doctrines contained in the scriptures, the governors of the church can have no scriptural warrant for imposing any such test. If the faith and doctrines contained in these confessions are the same with the faith and doctrines contained in the scriptures, the requiring an assent to the latter will enable the governors of the church to find out as much to the full as they are warranted to find out. Be it here observed, that the right of interfering is wholly built upon the right of finding out what, unless subscription to the confession is an infallible test, they never can find out. For it is not a clear case that any one who subscribes the confession assents to every thing contained in it. And what is the consequence if he does not? Why truly "he frustrates the purpose "for which confessions were established." And is not this frustration a possible case? Is it not a very common case? Is it not what subscribers of different complexions object to each other on various occasions with all freedom? And are not the governors of the church most highly obliged to the learned professor for pleading so strenuously for their right to be the dupes of their own policy?

* The protestant churches every where set up on this principle; what regard they have paid to it since, is another affair. One remarkable instance may be worth mentioning; "The refugees," says

they have all the same right in an equal degree; and the decisions of one are, in point of authority, upon the very same level with those of another. This being so, I do not see how it is possible for any church to exercise this right in those instances where she establishes doctrines peculiar to herself, and inconsistent with the doctrines of other churches without abridging those churches of their right to establish their own doctrines. No church can have a right to establish any doctrines, but upon the supposition that they are true. If the doctrines established in one church are true, the contrary doctrines established in another church must be false; and I presume, no church will contend for a right to establish false doctrines.* And indeed, whatever may be

Mr. La Roche, "who were driven out of the low-countries by the "Duke of Alva, in the year 1571, held a synod at Embden; and "their first canon was, that no church should have dominion over "another church." And, to testify their sincerity herein, they put the French and Dutch confessions upon the same footing, by subscribing them both. *Abridgement*, vol. I. p. 141. But N. B. The Dutch confession was not then established, and these were poor friendless refugees. 'Tis pity but some of them had lived to see how sacredly this canon of Embden was observed in the synod of Dort.

* "A very common distinction, says Dr. Rutherforth, will clear "up this matter. No church has a right to establish, as no individual has a right to hold false doctrines, as false doctrines. But if "either a protestant church, or an individual protestant, should, "after due consideration, be persuaded that any doctrines are true, "which in reality are false, either the right of a church, acting under this persuasion, to provide for and secure the public teaching of "these doctrines, which in the present question is all that we mean "by a right to establish them, must be well founded; or an individual, acting under the same persuasion, can have no right to hold "them." *Charge*, p. 17. How much is a controversial writer at his ease, when he takes the liberty to make his own case, and to apply to it his own distinctions! And is this in truth ALL that the author of the *Confessional* means by *a right to establish these doctrines?* Does he not plainly mean a right pretended to in any one protestant

pretended, this is the very footing upon which all protestant churches have, occasionally, treated the churches that differed from them, and from whence the conclusion to a disinterested by-stander is obvious; namely, that, in consequence of these co-ordinate powers, none of them had a right to establish any doctrines, but with the unanimous consent of all the rest.

It is true, protestants of one state or country have been tender of condemning the confession of those of another, by any public sentence; and reason good: their powers are li-

church to establish its peculiar doctrines, as standards of orthodoxy for the whole body of protestants? Does he not plainly mean such an establishment as excludes or reprobates other churches which do not hold the same doctrines? Does he not plainly oppose to this pretended right, the principle of co-ordination, on which all protestant churches at first set up, and by which they renounced, each for itself, all dominion over any other church? And has he not explained himself beyond the possibility of being mistaken by any reader of common sense and common attention, by considering the case of more than one protestant church in one protestant state? And shall he after this be supposed to mean no more by a right to establish doctrines, than "a right in a particular church to provide "for and secure the public teaching of such doctrines as she holds "within her own department?" But, one word more with the learned professor. While he was looking for this distinction, hath he not manifestly deserted his own church system? He forgets, I'm afraid, upon this occasion, that his particular churches are not like Mr. Locke's voluntary societies, where the consent of all the members must be had in order to establish any thing, and in that respect may each of them be compared to an individual protestant with sufficient propriety. Whereas the professor's particular churches have rulers and governors appointed under Christ, and invested with a right independent of the lay-members, to establish whatsoever they may judge to be expedient for them. He hath therefore brought himself under a necessity either of divesting his church-governors of their right, or of dropping the analogy between a particular protestant church and a protestant individual, unless indeed it is such an individual as is in the arms of a nurse.

mited by their situation, and extend not beyond their own departments; nor would their censures be regarded elsewhere. But what instance is there upon record, where this liberty has been allowed (as the co-ordinate principle manifestly requires it should be) to more than one church in the same protestant state? Every party, in every protestant state, has, by turns, made some attempts to have their religious tenets established by public authority. In every state some one party has succeeded; and, having succeeded, imposes its own confession upon all the rest; excluding all dissenters from more or fewer of the common privileges of citizens, in proportion as the civil magistrate is more or less in the mood to vindicate, or distinguish, the system he thinks fit to espouse.

This has been the case, at different periods, with different churches in the same country. And (what is chiefly remarkable to our present purpose) the party defeated has constantly exclaimed against the practice, as an unreasonable, unchristian, and wicked tyranny;—the very practice which they themselves, in their prosperity, endeavoured to support by every claim of right, and to defend by every argument of utility and expedience.*

* "It belongeth to synods and councils ministerially to determine "controversies of faith and cases of conscience." *Assembly's Confession*, ch. xxxi. art. 3. This hath given occasion to apply some words of Isaiah, viz. *Look unto the rock from whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence ye are digged*, to certain dissenters, who have scrupled to subscribe the first clause of the 20th article of our church. At present, this wit would be misapplied. In the year 1718, some of the wisest and most eminent among the dissenting ministers made a noble stand against some imposers of tests in

Of this many remarkable examples might be given, in the complaints of church-men of different denominations in adversity; who, in the day of their exaltation, had carried church-power as far as it could well stretch; and who, when the severities of the adverse party forced these lamentations from them, were obliged to plead their cause upon principles, which made no reserve of authority with respect to one sort of religious society more than another.*

Among others to whom established confessions had been particularly grievous, were the remonstrants in Holland, after the synod of Dort. Their assemblies were prohibited, and their ministers silenced and banished, for no other offence but contradicting certain doctrines, which, as we have seen above, the fore-

their own fraternity. And in the year 1727, more of them refused to subscribe this very Westminster Confession.

* Thus the ingenious Bishop Taylor, pleading for *the liberty of prophesying*, at a time when, to use his own expression, *the vessel of the church was dashed in pieces*, found it necessary to assert against the task-masters of those days, that "if we have found out what "foundation Christ and his apostles did lay; that is, what body and "system of articles simply necessary they taught, and required of us "to believe; we need not, we cannot go any farther for a founda-"tion, we cannot enlarge that system or collection." p. 17.—But, when the shattered vessel came to be refitted, the skilful pilots found she neither had been, nor ever could be, steered to the port they aimed at, by these directions. And accordingly, when they got possession of the helm, they adopted the old enlarged system, adding as much more of their own to the collection, as they perceived might be necessary to conduct the vessel in safety to the *golden coast*; without paying the least regard to the remonstrances of the s: who claimed an equal property in the bottom, and who incessantly clamoured, that neither the freight nor the steerage were proper for the port to which they were bound, and which, as all sides outwardly agreed, lay in a *kingdom that was not of this world*.

fathers of their persecutors held to be of no importance ; and which had gained no new merit, but that of being established by law.

One would have imagined that this usage would have cured the remonstrants of all good-liking to confessions for ever. And so perhaps it did of their good-liking to all confessions—but one of their own framing, which Episcopius and his fellows actually composed, subscribed, and published, in this state of exile.

This step was so very extraordinary for men in their condition, whose distresses had been occasioned by enforcing a system drawn up in the same form, that they rightly judged the world would expect some satisfactory account of it, which therefore they attempt to give, in a long apology prefixed to their confession; wherein, not contented with alledging such inducements as might well be supposed to oblige men in their situation to explain and avow their principles to the public, they enter into a particular detail of arguments in favour of confessions in general; dropping indeed the point of right to establish them as tests of truth, but insisting largely on their utility and expedience in a variety of cases ; and, as they seem to me to have brought together the whole merits of the cause on that head of defence, I shall attend them in the next chapter, with some particular considerations on the several articles of their plea.

CHAP. III.

The Apology of the Remonstrants *for Confessions, in consideration of their* Expediency *and* Utility, *examined.*

IT had been objected to confessions in general, that "they derogated from the authority and sufficiency of the scriptures; that "they encroached upon the liberty of private "conscience, and the independency of protestant churches; and that they tended to "nothing better than separation and schism."

The Remonstrants reply, that "these objections did not affect confessions themselves, "but only the abuse of them." But, however, as the objectors had so many instances to appeal to, where confessions had been, and still were, thus abused, and the Remonstrants so few, if any, where they were not, the latter were obliged to set out with very ample concessions.

"Undoubtedly," say they, "those phrases "and forms of speaking, in which God and "Christ delivered themselves at first, for the "instruction of unlearned and ordinary men, "must needs be sufficient for the instruction "of christians in all succeeding ages;—consequently, it is possible that the church of "Christ may not only *be*, but also that it may "*well be*, without those human forms and explications, called Confessions."*

* Preface to the Remonstrants Confession, published in English at London, 1676. p. 12, 13.

One would wonder now, what the Remonstrants could find to say for the support of their side of the question. For, if the phrases and forms of speaking, made use of in the written word, are sufficient for the instruction of unlearned and ordinary men in all things which concern the worship of God, and their own and others everlasting salvation; and if, as the objectors insisted, and the Remonstrants could not deny, many and great evils were, for the most part, occasioned by such phrases and forms of speaking in confessions as are not to be found in scripture, the objectors were fairly authorised to conclude, not barely for the possibility that the church of Christ might *well be*, but for the certainty that it might *better be*, without such human forms than with them.

The Remonstrants, however, attempt to recover their ground as follows: "If prophe-
" syings, or interpretations of scripture, say
" these Apologists, are not unprofitable, yea
" rather, if they be sometimes in certain re-
" spects necessary, when proposed by teachers
" and pastors in universities and churches, or
" other christian assemblies, for the informa-
" tion of the ignorant, &c. in familiar, clear,
" and usual expressions, though not in the
" very words of scripture, it cannot seem
" unprofitable, much less unlawful or hurt-
" ful, if more ministers of Jesus Christ do, by
" mutual consent, joint studies and endea-
" vours, for the greater illustration of divine
" truth, removing of slanders, edifying the
" christian community, or other holy and pi-
" ous purposes, publicly open and declare their

" judgments upon the meanings of scripture, " and that in certain composed forms."*

It is no easy matter to discover the drift of this argument. Do the Remonstrants mean to insist on the superior influence and authority of more ministers, in the business of expounding the scriptures, in comparison with single pastors or professors? By no means. Upon any supposition of this nature, the Belgic confession had an authority which rendered their revolt from it inexcusable.† Would they be understood to say, that confessions composed by the joint studies of several ministers are as useful as ordinary sermons and lectures in churches and universities? No, they make no such comparison; they only infer, with much ambiguity, from the premises, that confessions, with the circumstances mentioned, cannot seem unprofitable.

But, be their meaning what you will, the cases of interpreting scripture in occasional prophesyings and in stated confessions are dis-

* Ibid. p. 13, 14.

† Dr. Stebbing, indeed, would have every one to own, that " thoſe explications of ſcripture, which, after the matureſt delibera- " tion, and the uſe of all proper helps, are agreed upon by a whole " body of men, are leſs liable to be faulty and defective, than thoſe " which particular perſons may frame to themſelves." *Rat. Enq.* p. 29. In plain Engliſh, *you will always be ſafeſt with the majority.* For where is the body of men who will not pretend to the *matureſt deliberation*, and the uſe of the *propereſt helps?* But the Remonſtrants were men of ſenſe, and ſaw, what Dr. Stebbing's cauſe required him to conceal, namely, that conſiderations of this kind muſt, in the event, drive every man headlong into the eſtabliſhed religion, whatever it happens to be, or by whomſoever deviſed; whether by a ſynagogue of Phariſees, a Turkiſh divan, a council of Trent, or what the Remonſtrants liked as little as any of them, a ſynod of Dort.

similar in so many respects, that nothing can be inferred from the utility of the former, in favour of the latter; but rather the contrary.

If prophesyings, or interpretations of scripture in christian assemblies, are not delivered in familiar, clear, and usual forms of speech, they are neither necessary nor profitable, nor can any thing be inferred from the utility of such prophesyings at all. On the other hand, if the scriptures are opened and explained to the people in easy and familiar expressions, by their ordinary pastors, what possible use can you find for a systematical confession? unless you think fit to establish it as a necessary supplement to the holy scripture, and then you once more return the question to the point of right.

Again. What the preacher delivers from the pulpit, or the professor from his chair, they deliver as the sentiments and conclusions of single men, who have no authority to enforce their explications, any farther than their own good sense, integrity, accuracy, and judgment, make way for them. For the rest, their doctrines may be questioned, the men themselves called upon to review them, and, if they see reason, correct, and even retract them, not only without offence, but, in some cases, with advantage to the common faith. But doctrines, opinions, and explications of scripture, reduced to a fixed form, and avowed by the public act of many subscribing ministers, (who by the way are full as likely to be fallible in a body, as in their personal capacity) put on quite another aspect. In that case all examination is precluded. No one subscriber is empowered to explain or correct

for the rest. Nor can any of them retract, without standing in the light of a schismatic and a revolter from his brethren.

It is to little purpose that the remonstrants would limit the stress to be laid upon confessions, to their agreement with truth, and reason, and scripture. The matter of complaint is, that this agreement should be predetermined by the decision of these leading subscribers, in such sort, as to discourage all free examination, and constrain the people to acquiesce in a precarious system, by the mere influence of great names and respectable authorities, which, without any additional weight, are too apt to overawe the judgment of all sorts of men, even in cases of the greatest importance.

The *expedience* of confessions in no wise appearing from these general considerations, let us now see what particular uses the remonstrants have for them.

And here they tell us " of times when gross " and noxious errors prevail in the world; " when necessary heads of belief are neglected, " and many points of faith urged and insisted " on, which are not necessary; when no dis- " tinction is made between doctrines that are " barely profitable, and those which are abso- " lutely necessary; when human inventions " are bound upon men's consciences; and, " lastly, when many false and groundless " doctrines are palliated and cloathed in scrip- " ture-language. In these times, they think " it not barely expedient, but in a good mea- " sure necessary, that pastors of churches " should advise and consult together, and, if

" they perceive that blind miserable mortals " may be assisted in their searches after truth, " in such days of danger, by a clear elucida- " tion of divine meanings, then may they " profitably set forth the same, &c."*

But, in the first place, how does it appear that confessions have more of this elucidating property than other sorts of rescripts? It is a common complaint, that these formularies of doctrine, abounding in artificial and scholastic terms, are rather apt to perplex and confound things that are otherwise clear and plain, than to illustrate any thing with a superior degree of perspicuity. And I am really afraid there is no room to except the very confession to which this apology is prefixed.

But to let this alone; there occurs another difficulty, with respect to this elucidation, not so easily got over. It is well known, that some opinions have been formally condemned by the framers of creeds and confessions, as gross and noxious errors, which, however, have been maintained by very solid reasoning, not to say considerable authorities, from the scriptures themselves.

" There are few heresies," says Dr. Stebbing, " which great learning and good sense " have not been called in to countenance: " he, therefore, that would effectually crush " them, must take away these supports."† That is to say, he *must*, if he *can*; and that has not always proved an easy task, even when attempted by the accumulated skill and learning of councils or convocations. These are

* Page 14, 15.—† *Rational Inquiry*, p. 47.

difficulties, out of which *blind miserable mortals* are rarely extricated by confessions, which are rather of the dogmatical, than the didactic strain ; and oftentimes leave the reader to guess at the reason why the compilers are so positive in some of their assertions, for which they do not condescend to offer any proof. These noxious errors too have, sometimes, procured themselves to be established by another party of confessionists and creedmakers ; in which case, these authorized formularies are so far from being of any real utility to an unprejudiced inquirer, that they only serve to destroy the force and virtue of each other.

Again, if confessions are really profitable towards suppressing these gross and noxious errors, it must be profitable, and in the same proportion needful, to enlarge and amplify them as often as such errors arise, and the birth of every new heresy should always be attended with a new article in the confession.*

Perhaps there is scarcely a year passes over, in any country where the presses are open, and men's tongues at liberty, without bringing forth some new opinion, or reviving some old one with new circumstances, contrary to, or at least different from, the approved and or-

* One article of difference between King Charles I. and the Scotch professors, *anno* 1638, turned upon the necessity of renewing and applying confessions of faith to every present emergency of the church. This the Scots compared to the riding of *Merches*, or boundaries, upon every new "Incroachment." And, indeed, supposing the utility of confessions to be what the remonstrants say it is, King Charles's whole convocation could not have furnished him with an answer to this argument of the North Britons in behalf of their new formulary. See *Rushworth's Collections*, vol. II. page 774.

thodox system; and consequently, within the description of a gross and noxious error. Suppose the requisite strictures on these heterodoxies had been added to the confessions of the several churches where they have appeared for the last two hundred years; to what a comfortable bulk would an *harmony* of these confessions have amounted by this time? what plenty of elucidation might such an *harmony* have afforded to *blind miserable mortals*? and what a field is here opened for declaiming against the indolence and drowsiness of our appointed watchmen, who, during this long and perilous interval, have been silent upon so many important subjects; suffering this multitude of heresies to pass uncorrected by any public censure, even while their partizans have been incessantly preaching up to us the great utility of confessions, as the only sovereign antidotes against them?

But, instead of inveighing against our superiors for any omissions of this kind, let us make use of this very circumstance to point out to them the inutility (perhaps something worse) of our present established formularies of faith and doctrine.——What is become of all those heresies against which none of these public provisions have been made? Why, many of them are dead and sunk down into utter oblivion, as if they had never been; others, being left open to free debate, have had no worse effect in religion, than other harmless and innocent, and even edifying problems, are allowed to have in literature and philosophy:—Whence the conclusion seems to be inevitable, that the malignity of other heresies (and perhaps the

very existence of some of them) has been perpetuated, only by the respectable notice that some church or other has thought fit to take of them in an established confession.

I will presume to support the justice of this remark, by an instance or two in our own establishment.

In the 42d of King Edward's Articles, a formal censure was passed upon the restorers of Origen's opinion concerning *the temporary duration of future punishments.* But in the Articles of 1562, this censure is not to be found. Undoubtedly the question is of great importance with respect to the influences and sanctions of the christian religion; nor is there any point of theology upon which churches may be supposed to decide more reasonably, than this. And yet, had the negative of this problem, *whether future punishments shall be eternal?* still been stigmatised with this heretical brand, we should probably have wanted several learned and accurate disquisitions on the subject, from some of our most eminent writers, such as Rust, Tillotson, Hartley, &c.; by whose researches we have gained at least a clearer state of the case, and a more accurate insight into the language of the scriptures relative to it, than the compilers of the article had before them; without laying any invidious prejudice on the judgment or conscience of any man living, or precluding the right that every christian hath to determine for himself, in a case where his interest is so great and important.

Again, the 40th of these original articles "affirmed it to be contrary to the orthodox

" faith, to maintain that the souls of men de-
" ceased do sleep, without any manner of
" sense, to the day of judgment, &c." This was likewise dismissed in 1562 ; since when, the doctrine condemned, and (some few faint efforts excepted) all controversy concerning it have lain dormant, till very lately, that something very like a demonstration that the compilers of this article were mistaken on this head, has been offered to the world ;* which probably had never seen the light, if an assent to this 40th article had still remained a part of our ministerial subscription.

As to what the remonstrants say of the neglect of necessary heads of belief ; urging and insisting on points of faith which are not necessary ; binding human inventions on men's consciences ; misapplications of scripture-expressions and authorities, and the like : if these are not to be prevented or corrected by the current labours of able and honest pastors, joined to the justice which every man owes to himself, in searching the scriptures for satisfaction in all doubtful cases ; it is in vain to expect any relief from confessions ; many of which, if not all, are accused on some side, of these very abuses which the remonstrants propose by their means to reform.

* In a sermon on *the nature and end of death*, and a curious appendix subjoined to the third edition of *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, &c. by Dr. Edmund Law, the reverend, learned, and worthy Master of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, now Bishop of Carlisle. How many doctrines are defended, how many are not opposed, not because they are to be found in the New Testament, but because they are established in a liturgy, or decided in an article ?

2. Another use which the remonstrants have for confessions is, "to obviate foul and dishonest slanders, calumnies, and suspicions, "with which those honest and upright divines, who undertake to set *blind miserable* "*mortals* right, may be soiled by their adversaries. In which case, say they, who is "there that will not think them constrained "to inform the christian world, what manner "of persons they are in religion, by an ingenuous confession of their judgment: especially if they see that, unless they do it, all "good men will be estranged from them, their "proselytes return to their vomit, and, consequently, the truth of God be wounded "through the sides of their wronged reputation."*

The remonstrants had here an eye to their own particular case, and therefore we shall do no wrong to their argument, if we determine the value of it by their particular success. One of the calumnies complained of in this preface, is, that "the remonstrants concealed "some things, of which they were ashamed to "give their judgment in public." How do they obviate this calumny by their confession? How does their publicly confessing some of their doctrines prove that they had concealed none? They do not venture to say, that in this formulary they had declared their judgment on every point of theology. On the contrary, they admit, that they had purposely waved certain thorny and subtile questions, leaving them to the idle and curious. Might

* Page 16, &c.

not the doctrines relative to these questions, be the very things they were ashamed to confess? and if so, what is their apology for waving them, but mere subterfuge and evasion?

But, indeed, it was worse with the poor remonstrants than all this came to. No sooner was their confession made public, than their adversaries fell upon them with a fresh load of calumnies, taking occasion from the confession itself; accusing it of "swarming with dreadful heresies from the beginning to the end, "not excepting even the very title page."*

What is now to be done? Shall the remonstrants go to work again, and publish a second confession to confute these new calumnies? and after that, if future occasion should be given (as they might be sure it would,) a third, and a fourth? No, common sense would tell them, it was all labour in vain, and that there is but one way of refuting these endless calumnies effectually; namely, by confronting the accusation with the matter of fact, and appealing from time to time to a sort of evidence which formularies of confession will not admit of.†

* *Bayle's Dict. Art.* Episcopius, Rem. F. See likewise La Roche, Abridg. p. 685. who mentions indeed only the censures of two private ministers on the remonstrants confession; an effect, I am afraid, of his extreme and two visible partiality for their cause. They who will take the trouble to turn to *Bayle, loc. cit.* will see, that the words transcribed above are part of a censure of this confession, published by the professors of Leyden.

† Episcopius found himself obliged to defend the confession of the remonstrants against the censures of four professors of Leyden, in an apology near ten times as long as the Confession itself. From this apology the professors extracted and published a specimen of calumnies and heterodox opinions, said to be contained in the said apology; to which Episcopius was again constrained to write a long

The remonstrants seem to have been aware, that it might be thought sufficient to obviate all charges of heresy, if the accused parties were only to express themselves in scripture-language. "But they tell us, that this very "thing is charged upon them as a crime, that, "under the words of scripture, they cherish "in their bosoms the worst meanings, and "most prejudicial to the glory of God, and "the salvation of man, which reduces them "to a necessity, whether they will or no—by "some public declaration of their judgment, "to purge themselves, and to maintain and "defend the sincerity of their belief."*

Well then, let us consider how this case stands. The calvinists charge it upon the remonstrants as a crime, that, under scripture-words, they cherish the worst meanings. The remonstrants say it is a calumny, and appeal to their confession. The same remonstrants bring the same accusation against another set of men, as we have seen above. May not

anſwer on the behalf of himſelf and his party. This begot a book, intituled, *Arcana Arminianiſmi*, written by *Nicholas Vedelius*, a profeſſor of Deventer. To which Epiſcopius replied in another, which he called *Vedelius Rhapſodus*. The controverſy probably was carried on ſtill farther, or at leaſt had furniſhed materials for continuing the diſpute *in infinitum*. Epiſcopius immediately foreſaw this, upon the neceſſity he found himſelf under to write his apology, and ingenuouſly lays the blame upon the writers of confeſſions: Qui Confeſſiones ſemel ſcribere incipiunt, de ſcribendis fine fine Apo- "logiis cogitare opus habeant. Apologia deinde Apologiam trudit, "uti fluctus fluctum: Nihil tam recte ſcribi poteſt, tam innoxie de- "fendi, tam candide ſuggeri, quod ſuſpicio maleſana non detorquet "in pejus, et livor morſu ſuo non maculat ac conſpurcat. Hinc "Apologiarum ac Declarationum nec modus, nec finis." *Epiſc. "Apol. pro Declar. Remonſtrantium."*

* Pag. 17. 18.

these men say too, it is a calumny? May not they too defend themselves in a confession? And at what does all this futile reasoning aim, but at proving, that whatever is once got into a confession, must of necessity be infallibly true?

Where indeed any particular church can procure an establishment for its confession, in such sort as to make it a rule of teaching, and a test of orthodoxy for all her pastors and professors, a bridle upon the tongue, and a shackle upon the pen-hand of every man who is disposed to speak or write against it, formularies of this kind *may* have their *use* and *expedience*, in *securing the privileges, interests, and emoluments, of that particular church*; and, being armed with coercive penalties, may likewise operate in the several cases above-mentioned. But, according to our apologists, these are the circumstances in which the abuses of confessions do chiefly consist. "They are not for "allowing confessions to be the limits and "bounds within which religion is to be shut "up; the indices of straight and crooked, or "the anvil to which all controversies of faith "are to be brought; nor would they have "any man tied to them, but just so far, and "so long, as he is convinced in his conscience, "that the doctrine of the confession accords "with the scripture."*

This is just and reasonable: and it would be both unjust and unreasonable, to deny the remonstrants their due praise for their moderation, tenderness, and honest regard to the

* Page 20, 21.

rights of private judgment. But, however, nothing is more certain, than that, by these limitations and concessions, they give up all the peculiar utility and expedience of these systematical forms, for which they profess themselves advocates in other parts of this preface; leaving them no more virtue or efficacy in instructing the ignorant, confuting errors and heresies, or silencing calumnies, than may be reasonably claimed by, and ascribed to, the writings and discourses of any particular divine of judgment and learning.

There is, indeed, little doubt, but that, in bringing down confessions so very low, particularly in their three-fold caution concerning the use of them, the remonstrants took a particular aim at the synod of Dort, by whose proud cruelty they had suffered so much. In their situation, to have put any high value upon public confessions, had been to preclude themselves from all reasonable apology for their conduct. And yet who knows, in what all this moderation and lenity would have ended, had the remonstrants been fortunate enough to have engaged the civil powers, and with them the majority, on their side? For my part, I should have entertained no worse opinion of their integrity, if, instead of this trimming apology, (wherein they dexterously enough fetch back with one hand what they had appeared to give with the other,) they had fairly and honestly told the world (what was certainly the truth of the case) that their circumstances required they should have a religious test as a cement of their party, and to put

them upon the respectable footing of a church. In the midst of all their moderation, we have seen them above expressing their concern, lest their proselytes should *return to their vomit.* In other passages they speak of confessions, as *watch-towers, ensigns, and standards.* On one occasion they have unwarily dropped this observation: "There are some things of so great "weight and moment, that they cannot be "gain-said without the extreme hazard of our "salvation. Freely to contradict these, or "*quietly to suffer them to be contradicted by* "*others, would be the farthest from prudence* "*and charity possible.*" What, may we suppose, would the gentle Episcopius have done with the gainsayers of these things, invested, as he might possibly have been, with a commission from the secular arm?* All this moderation

* The magistrates of Rotterdam, being very angry that the "*contra-remonstrant* ministers should hold private assemblies, notwithstanding the injunctions they had made to the contrary, published a very severe ordinance against all ecclesiastical assemblies, held any where but in public churches. The place where such assemblies should meet, to be confiscated for the benefit of the poor. The ministers, and other persons who should be present at the said assembly, to be condemned to pay three hundred livres; and to enforce the payment of such monies, every one of the offenders was either to suffer imprisonment, or else to have his goods seized, and public sale made of them, if he could not be apprehended." Le Vassor Hist. of Lewis XIII. book viii. sub anno. 1616. from Brandt's History of the Reformation in the Low Countries. The Historian says indeed, "If we believe what the remonstrants say, the ministers of their party had no hand in this ordinance." But for this we have only their own words, and if they disapproved it, why did they not publicly disavow their agreement with the principles of it? Le Vassor goes on to say:—"But how shall we excuse the learned Grotius, who drew up this ordinance himself?" How indeed! for his own excuses are weak and trifling, even to contempt. "If the Arminians," says Le Vassor, "had found themselves the

and forbearance might, after all, have amounted to no more than what all protestant churches profess; namely, to assert the sovereign authority of the scriptures, with a commodious saving to themselves of a concurrent privilege, of providing for the utility of their own *well-being*, by an orthodox test.

Let no man say, that, considering the temperate language of the remonstrants, surmise of this kind cannot be justified. In this verbal deference for the authority of the scriptures, no church has ever gone farther than our own, nor consequently left greater latitude for private judgment.

"We receive and embrace" (says the church of England by the pen of Bishop Jewel) "all the "canonical scriptures both of the old and new "testament;—we own them to be the heaven-"ly voices by which God hath revealed his "will to us;—in them *only* can the mind of "man acquiesce; in them all that is necessary "for our salvation is abundantly and plainly "contained;—they are the very might and "power of God unto salvation; they are

"ſtrongeſt party, would not Grotius have preſſed earneſtly for the "execution of an ordinance that was of his own drawing up. Would "he not have been ſtill for their going on farther? This great man "proteſts that he a long time perſiſted in denying them," [the magiſtrates of Rotterdam] "the aſſiſtance of his pen, and that he "always had an averſion to violent meaſures. We may believe him "upon his word. But I could wiſh that he would have ingenuouſly "owned his miſtake, and ſaid that he forgot himſelf on this occaſion." It had been better ſtill if he had fairly told his adverſaries:—"You "are now the more powerful party, and therefore we muſt ſubmit. "But from your own feelings of human nature you may eaſily "judge, that if we had been the majority, we ſhould have done juſt "what you are doing now."

" the foundations of the apostles and prophets " upon which the church of God is built; " they are the most certain and infallible rule, " by which the church may be reduced if she " happen to stagger, slip, or err, by which " *all ecclesiastical doctrines ought to be tried;* " *no law, no tradition, no custom, is to be re-* " *ceived or continued, if it be contrary to scrip-* " *ture;* no, though St. Paul himself, or an " angel from heaven, should come and teach " otherwise."*

This was once the sense of the church of England, whatever authority she may have since pretended to, upon other principles. Be this as it may, such of her divines as have asserted this authority with the uttermost zeal, and in the highest terms, have yet, in the same breath extolled her moderation, in laying no greater stress upon her confession, than the remonstrants themselves seem to contend for.

" Our church," says bishop Bull, " pro- " fesseth not to deliver all her articles (all, I " say, for some of them are coincident with " the fundamental points of christianity) as " essentials of faith, without the belief where- " of no man can be saved; but only propounds " them as a body of safe and pious principles, " for the preservation of peace, to be subscrib- " ed, and not openly contradicted, by her " sons."*

Nay, even the rigidly ecclesiastical Dr. Stebbing allows, that " when we speak of a right " to determine what is the true sense of any

* *Contra eas nec legem, nec traditionem, nec consuetudinem ullam audiendam esse*, says the Latin *Apol. sect.* 27.

* *Vindication of the Church of England*, p. 178.

" article of faith, we do not propose the expli-
" cation, given in virtue of this right, as a
" rule for the faith or conduct of christians ;
" but only as a rule, according to which they
" shall either be admitted or not admitted to
" officiate as public ministers."*

'Tis true, the obscurity of these concessions is such, that no man can tell what is intended to be given up by them, and what reserved for the church. In my opinion, they are hardly sense. But this likewise is the misfortune of the remonstrants who oscillate the question backwards and forwards, till no mortal can find out what they mean to ascribe to, or what to detract from, the virtue and merit of a public confession.

The remonstrants, however, have had thus far the better of us ; they believed their confession at least when they made this apology for it. We are driven to make apologies for, and even to defend, subscription to a confession which many subscribers do not believe ; and concerning which no two thinking men (according to an ingenious and right reverend writer) ever agreed exactly in their opinion, even with regard to any one article of it.†

Of what curious materials these extraordinary Apologies and Defences are framed, we are now proceeding to examine.

* *Rational Enquiry*, p. 36.
† Dedication to the *Essay on Spirit*, p. vi.

CHAP. IV.

A particular Examination of Bishop BURNET's *Introduction to the Exposition of the* XXXIX *Articles of the Church of England.*

HITHERTO our observations have been general. Little has been said on the subject of established confessions, in which our own church has any greater concern than other protestant churches. We shall now be a little more particular. And as Bishop Burnet has brought together all the topics of any moment, relating to the subscriptions required of the english clergy, in a particular discourse prefixed to his Exposition of our articles of religion, we shall do our venerable mother no wrong, in selecting, for our present consideration, the apology of so masterly an advocate.

But, before we proceed to examine his lordship's solutions of the several difficulties which have been supposed to encumber the case of our english subscriptions, it may be necessary to give a little previous attention to the motives and reasons which engaged his lordship in this particular work of expounding the articles of our church.

"Some of the articles," says the bishop, "seemed to lean so entirely to an absolute pre-"destination, that some, upon that account, "scrupled the subscribing them: and others "reproached our church with this, that though "our articles looked one way, yet our doctors, "for the most part, went the other way. It

" was fit such a point should be well cleared; " and it was in order to that, that the late " blessed Queen [MARY] did command me to " explain those first; which she afterwards en- " larged to the whole thirty-nine.*"

Let us reflect a little on this remarkable circumstance.

Every one knows that, in the sensible and pathetic *conclusion*, subjoined to this excellent prelate's *History of his own times*, his lordship has not scrupled to declare, "that the requir- " ing subscription to the thirty-nine articles is " a great imposition;"† an opinion which was not the result of a late experience. His lordship had expressed himself to the same purpose to the principal men of Geneva, with respect to their *consensus doctrinæ*, many years before he could have any view to the circumstances which gave rise to his Exposition, and that with so much zeal and eloquence, that, according to the writer of his life (a witness worthy of all belief,) "it was through his (the bishop's) " credit, and the weight of his character, that " the clergy at Geneva were released from " these subscriptions, and only left subject to " punishment and censure, in case of writing " or preaching against the established doc- " trine."‡

These being his lordship's uniform sentiments, in the earlier as well as the latter part of his life, a question is naturally suggested, why he should write a book, in the mean sea-

* Bishop Burnet's Remarks on the Examination of his Exposition of the Second Article of our Church, p. 2.

† Folio edition, vol. II. p. 634.

‡ Life, vol. II. fol. edit. p. 693.

son, on the avowed purpose of making men easy under their obligations to subscribe; an attempt which could have no other tendency, than to perpetuate the imposition in all succeeding times? For, the point the bishop was to clear being this, "that the articles were "capable of the several senses of different "doctors," the consequence would be, that all might safely subscribe them: which would of course supersede the necessity of abolishing subscriptions on the part of the church, let the imposition be ever so grievous to those who could not come into the bishop's expedients; and this, as his lordship had good reason to know, was no uncommon case.

Whether bishop Burnet considered, or indeed whether he saw, his enterprize in this point of light, cannot be determined. That there were some considerations, which, notwithstanding the weight of a royal command, made him enter upon this task with no little reluctance, appears pretty plainly from the following particulars.

1. In a paragraph just now cited from one of his lordship's pamphlets, we are informed that he undertook his exposition, at the command of queen Mary: by whom, he likewise says elsewhere, he was first moved to write it.* But in the preface to his Exposition, he says, "he was first moved to undertake that work, "by that great prelate who then sat at the "helm [Abp. Tillotson,] and only determined "in it, by the command abovementioned af-"terwards."

* Hift. O. T. vol. II. p. 228.

You may, if you please, call this a contradiction; to me the truth of the case is clearly this, that the great prelate, unable to prevail with his friend Burnet to undertake an affair of that nature at his own motion, applied to the queen, whose influence, added to his own, left the good bishop no room to decline the service, however disagreeable it might be to him.

2. The queen and the archbishop dying soon after the exposition was finished, and before it was put to the press, the bishop, as he informs us himself, "being advised not to "publish it, by some of his friends, who con-"curred with him in opinion, that such a work "would lay him open to many malicious at-"tacks, kept it by him in manuscript, no less "than five years: at the end of which inter-"val, he was prevailed on by the archbishop "[Tenison] and many of his own order, to "delay the publishing it no longer."* To which solicitations we may suppose his lordship to have given way with the less difficulty, as he was now at liberty to speak his mind in a preface, which, it is highly probable, had never seen the light in the circumstances we now have it, if the queen and Tillotson had survived the publication of the Exposition. For,

3. In this preface, the bishop takes particular care to apprize his readers, "that his Ex-"position was not a work of authority; and "that, in what he had done, he was, as to the "far greater part, rather an historian, and a

† Hist. O. T. ubi supra.

"collector of what others had written, than "an author himself." But, what is still more, he there freely declares, the slender opinion he had of the effect of such expedients as he had suggested in his introduction. "The set-"tling on some equivocal formularies," says his lordship, "will never lay the contention "that has arisen, concerning the chief points "in difference between the lutherans and the "calvinists."* An observation which will hold good, with respect to equivocal senses put upon more positive and dogmatical formularies. In neither case are the men of different systems "left free," as the bishop thinks they should be, "to adhere to their own opinions:" and so long as they are not, they will be for ever struggling to get loose. No peace will ensue.

These sentiments, I humbly apprehend, had not appeared where we now find them, if the Exposition had been published as soon as it was finished. The right reverend author would most probably have suppressed them, in mere tenderness to the good archbishop, whose notions concerning these healing measures, and middle ways, were very different from those of bishop Burnet. His grace's temper was mild and cautious, even to the borders of timidity. His leading object was to keep church-matters in peace. What he thought of subscriptions, is not very clear. Possibly he might think they were unwarrantable impositions, and wish, at the bottom, to be well rid of them.† But

* See *Bayle's Dict.* Musculus, Rem. [G].

† And yet Dr. Birch, in his life of this eminent prelate, hath preserved an anecdote, by no means favourable to this surmise. I mean that strange equivalent proposed by his grace, in lieu of the common

the virulence of the opposition to a proposed review of the liturgy in 1689, had taught him caution with respect to such attempts. His grace might, and certainly did, wish to procure more liberty for himself and all honest men, to write and speak their sentiments freely. But the articles stood in the way, an immoveable barrier to the church,—a sort of a guard-house, to which the centinels of the hierarchy were for ever dragging poor culprits who had strayed ever so little beyond the verge of the court. All that could be done, as the case then stood, was to expound these articles so, that men of different opinions might subscribe them; and, by that means, be brought to bear with each other in controvertible points, and to debate matters freely, without incurring suspicions or reproaches of heresy or prevarication. Into this service, I presume, was the bishop of Salisbury pressed by his grace of Canterbury; and, with whatever reluctance he might undertake it, we may be sure he would never mortify his friend by publicly declaring, as he does in this preface, the contemptible opinion he had of such expedients.

form of subscription, viz. *We do submit to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church of England, as it* SHALL BE *established by law, and promise to teach and practise accordingly.* This would be bowing our necks to the yoke with a witness. What we subscribe to now, is before us; and in a condition to be examined before hand. What SHALL BE established hereafter, we know not. By such a subscription, a man might oblige himself to teach and practise popery itself. "The Church of England," said Bishop Burnet once in a debate, "is an equivocal expression; and if popery "should prevail, it would be called the Church of England still." See *Vox Cleri*, p. 68. *Birch, Life of Tillotson*, 8vo. p. 183.

4. There is one circumstance farther to be observed on this subject, which is well worth our notice. Bishop Burnet was under a greater difficulty with respect to such an undertaking, than most men. The readiest way to have answered Tillotson's purpose, would have been to consider and expound this articular system so, that subscription to it might stand for no more than a peaceable acquiescence, or, at most, an engagement not openly to contradict it. But, unluckily for the present expounder, he had long before declared in a celebrated work, "that there appeared no reason for this conceit, no such thing [as their being intended only for articles of peace] being declared when the articles were first set out; insomuch that they, who subscribed them then, did either believe them to be true, or else they did grossly prevaricate."*

It is indeed highly probable, that his lordship never altered his opinion in this matter. For even when his Exposition was about to be published, bishop Williams strongly recommended, that they might be considered only as articles of peace. Upon which the late judge Burnet, mentioning this incident in his father's life, observes, "that there might, perhaps, be reason to wish, that they had only been imposed as such, but there was nothing in our constitution to warrant an expositor in giving that sense to them." His father was plainly in the same sentiments, when he set out his Exposition; which makes it the more extraordinary, that some modern writers

* Hiſt. Reformat. vol. II. p. 169.

should still contend for this pacific sense of subscription, when two such able judges, the one of the original intention of the church, the other of the point of law, have so clearly and positively determined against them.

Whether bishop Burnet would have given more room to subscribers in his Exposition, if that passage in his history of the reformation had been out of the way, it would even be impertinent to guess. Had bishop Williams been the expositor, he would, it is likely, have carried subscriptions no higher than an obligation to acquiesce in the doctrine of our articles; upon a presumption, possibly, that the present generation, if they could agree upon it, need not be bound by the original intention of the church or the compilers. Sir Thomas Burnet, however, we see, carries us back to our constitution; and that implies, that what was once the intention of the church in this matter, must be still her intention; and so, undoubtedly, thought the bishop his father. And as his lordship had all along seen things in this light, it is amazing to me, that the sense he expressed of the first subscriptions, in his history of the reformation, should not suggest to him, that he could no more give the subscribers of the present age the privilege of availing themselves of different grammatical senses, than he could allow them to consider the articles as articles of peace.

His lordship hath said in plain terms, "that "they who subscribed the articles when they "were first set out, did either believe them to "be true, or else they did grossly prevaricate." Now, if they believed them to be true, they

certainly believed them to be true in one precise uniform sense; that is to say, in a sense exclusive of all diversity of opinion, as the title of the articles plainly imports. And if so, what is there in our constitution to warrant an expositor to allow men to subscribe in different senses? If the first subscribers would have prevaricated in so doing, the original intention of the compilers will fix the same reproach upon all subscribers who deviate from the church's sense to this hour.

But, whether we are right in supposing the good bishop to have undertaken this task against the grain or not, we have good reason to believe, that his success did not yield him the highest satisfaction in the latter end of his life. His discontent will appear by and by, in a citation from a pamphlet he was obliged to write in defence of his Exposition, immediately after it was published; and in his golden legacy, at the end of his last history, he scruples not to say, "that the greater part of the clergy "subscribe the articles without ever examin- "ing them, and others do it because they "must do it, though they can hardly satisfy "their consciences about some things in them." Is not this saying, that all his pains in expounding the articles, and all his expedients to temper the case of subscription to all tastes and complexions, had been absolutely thrown away; and that subscription, after all the colours that can be put upon it, is no better than an unwarrantable imposition?

I cannot leave this view of the connection, between these two prelates, Tillotson and Burnet, without a short reflection on these trim-

ming methods in matters of religion. When were they ever known to succeed? And where were they ever known to conciliate the mind of any one of those unreasonable zealots, to whose humour they were accommodated? We, of this generation, have lived to see how greatly archbishop Tillotson was mistaken, in thinking to win over the high-churchmen of those days, by his healing expedients. His gentle, lenitive spirit, was to their bigotry, what oil is to the fire. Bishop Burnet's friendship for the archbishop carried him into these measures, contrary to his natural bent, and in mere complaisance to the archbishop's apprehensions of a storm, which he dreaded above all other things. And I remember to have heard some old men rejoice, that Burnet was kept down, by Tillotson's influence, from pushing the reformation of the church to an extremity that might have endangered the government itself. Some of these men, however, might have remembered, that when the archbishop was no longer at hand to temper Burnet's impetuosity, the latter had prudence sufficient to temper his courage, and to keep him from attempting, what he had sense enough to perceive was impracticable.* But, after all,

* This truly wise and good prelate, however, seems to have entertained some hope, that, upon the accession of his Majesty King George I. things might take a more favourable turn. For thus he expresses himself in the Dedication of the third volume of his History of the Reformation to that illustrious Monarch, of ever-to-be-honoured memory:—"Your Majesty we trust, is designed by God to "*complete* the reformation itself; to rectify what may be yet amiss, "and to supply what is defective among us; to oblige us to live and "to labour more suitably to our profession; to unite us more "firmly among ourselves; to bury, and for ever to extinguish the

what has been the consequence of Tillotson's gentleness, and Burnet's complaisance for the times? Even this; these two eminent lights of the english church could not have been more opposed while they lived, or more abused and vilified since they died, had they firmly and vigorously promoted, at all adventures, that reformation in the church of England, which, they were both of them deeply conscious, she very much wanted.*

But, after all, if what bishop Burnet has offered under all these disadvantages, will not justify the church of England, in requiring subscription to the xxxix articles, or leave room for the sincerity of those doctors, who seem to go one way, while the articles look another, we may venture to conclude, without

" fears of our relapsing again into popery; and to establish a confi-
" dence and correspondence with the protestant and reformed churches
" abroad." If any one ask how these hopes of the good bishop came to be disappointed? he must be referred to the history of the subsequent times. There are two incidents, however, upon record, which alone will go a great way towards accounting for the disappointment. 1. Bishop Burnet died in about seven months after the accession of that monarch, from whose wisdom, moderation, and steadiness, he expected all these good things, namely in March 1715. And, 2. The January following, *Dr. William Wake*, was promoted to the see of Canterbury; and he rather chose *to establish a confidence and correspondence with the Popish Gallican* church than with the PROTESTANT REFORMED churches, either at home or abroad. t

* Besides the staler instances of the outrageous treatment these two eminent prelates have met with in and nearer their own times, how implacably the malice of some men pursues them even to the present moment, may be seen in an abusive and scandalous character given of Bishop Burnet, in a late thing called, *Observations upon Tacitus*; in some jacobite remarks on the Life of Archbishop Tillotson. It is an honour to the puny author of *The Confessional*, to be reviled by the same sort of zealots who abused these great men, and for the same sort of offence.

any just imputation of temerity, that this service will hardly be more effectually performed by men of another stamp, who may probably engage in it with more alacrity and less circumspection. What the good bishop has said on this behalf, we now proceed to consider.

His lordship begins with stating the seeming impropriety "of making such a collection of "tenets the standard of the doctrine of a church, "that, according to his lordship, is deservedly "valued by reason of her moderation. This," says the bishop, "seems to be a departing from "the simplicity of the first ages, which yet we "set up for a pattern."*

This objected impropriety (which, by the way, his lordship exceedingly strengthens and illustrates, by an induction of particulars) he rather endeavours to palliate and excuse, or, as he terms it, explain, than to deny or confute. He gives us an historical recital of the practice of former times, to shew that our church acts after a precedent of long standing. To this no other answer is necessary, than that this was the practice of times, which were not remarkable either for their moderation or simplicity, and of whose example the church of England cannot avail herself, consistently with her pretensions to these two amiable qualities.†

* Introduction, p. 1.

† Ecclesiastical History, from the days of Constantine downwards, bears an ample testimony to this truth. After Constantine took it into his head to accomodate the church according to changes he thought proper to make in the civil constitution of the empire, (see Mosheim, Hist. Eccles. p. 140.) there was very little either of moderation in the government, or of simplicity in the doctrine and worship of the christian church so called.

But it seems this practice was originally the practice of the apostles: a consideration, which will not only authorize our imitation, but strongly imply the utility and edification of the thing itself.

"There was a form," says his lordship, "settled very early in most churches. This St. "Paul, in one place, calls, *the form of doctrine* "*that was delivered;* in another place, *the form* "*of sound words;* which those, who were fixed "by the apostles in particular churches, had "received from them. These words of his do "import a *standard* or *fixed formulary*, by "which all doctrines were to be examined."* The passages here referred to are, Rom. vi. 17. —1 Tim. iv. 6.—to which are added in the margin, 1 Tim. vi. 3.—2 Tim. i. 13. and the Greek words in these several passages which are supposed to signify this *standard* or *fixed formulary* run thus—Τυπος διδαχης — Ὑποτυπωσις υγιαινοντων λογων—Λογοι πιςεως, και καλης διδασκαλιας—Ὑγιαινοντες λογοι, οἱ τȣ Κυριȣ ημων Ιησȣ Χριςȣ, και η κατ' ευσεβειαν διδασκαλια.

Now, when a capable and unprejudiced reader considers the variety of expression in these several passages, he will probably be inclined to think, that a fixed formulary of doctrine is the last thing a plain man would look for in them. A fixed formulary, one would think, should have a fixed title. Nor is it at all probable, that one and the same form of words should be described in terms, which may denote an hundred different forms.

To enter into a just criticism on these expressions, would be tedious and unnecessary.

* Introd, p. 2.

Suffice it to observe, after very competent judges, that τυπος διδαχης, and υ'ποτυπωσις υ'γιαινοντων λογων, appear to refer rather to the exemplification of the christian doctrine in the practice of pious believers, than to any form of words. The doctrine is one thing, and the type of the doctrine another. The doctrine is, and must be, expressed by, and consequently contained in, some form of words. But the type of that form must be somewhat different from the form itself; and the general acceptation of the word τυπος, points out the practical exemplification of the doctrine, to be the thing here intended. The text, Rom. vi. 17. is, it must be owned, obscure and difficult; but, without giving this sense to the words τυπος διδαχης, it is absolutely unintelligible.* And whatever is the signification of τυπος here, must be the meaning of υ'ποτυπωσις, 2 Tim. i. 13.†

Again, the literal english of υ'γιαινοντες λογοι, is *healing* or *salutary words;* that is, the words

* See Grotius and Bengelius's Gnomon upon the place τυπος. Typus, veſtigium, figura, exemplar, forma, *Hen. Stephens.* Act xxiii. 25. τυπος, is the literal copy of Lyſias's epiſtle to Felix, not the ſum or abridgement of it.

† The word is but once more to be found in the New Teſtament, viz. 1 Tim. i. 16. where the Apoſtle ſays, *he found* mercy——προς υ'ποτυπωσιν των μελλοντων πιστευειν &c. for a pattern; which is the ſame thing as an example of the doctrine of pardon and mercy, thro' Chriſt. In what ſenſe the word τυπος was afterwards uſed, may be ſeen in Mills's tranſlation of Bruys's Hiſt. of the Popes, vol. II. p. 428. where an inſtrument, or edict, of the Emperor Conſtans, for the pacification of the diſputes concerning the two wills of Chriſt, is called the Type; which inſtrument contained no formulary of doctrine, but only enjoined that the parties at variance ſhould abide by the ſcriptures, the five œcumenical councils, and the plain and ſimple paſſages of the fathers.

of salvation or eternal life. Our translators have rendered the greek participle by the equivocal words *sound* and *wholesome*, which signified, I suppose, in their ideas, the same with *orthodox*.

If you ask where these *healing words* are to be found? I answer, in the scriptures, sometimes, perhaps, abridged and comprehended in some short summaries, which occur in Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus. But these are evidently not the fixed formularies his lordship means. As the certain consequence of that must have been, that no man, or body of men whatsoever, could have had the least authority to add to them, or enlarge them in any future time.

And if any other standard or formulary is meant, it then comes to our turn to ask the question, where is it to be found? what is become of it? For that it should be lost, or drop into utter oblivion, if it once had a real existence, is wholly incredible.

In answer to this demand, the bishop gives us to understand, "that, by a fixed formulary, "he does not mean one precise and invariable "form of words, which he thinks it improba- "ble the apostles should leave behind them. "For his lordship observes, that the first apo- "logists for christianity, when they deliver a "short abstract of the christian faith, do all "vary from one another, both as to the order, "and as to the words themselves. Whence he "thinks it more probable, that they received "these short abstracts from the apostles them- "selves, with some variation."

But surely, the moment you admit of variations, not only the idea of a fixed formulary, but even the use of any formulary, as a standard or test of all doctrines, immediately vanishes away. There must be left, in such varying formularies, room for doubtful and precarious judgments: and the scriptures alone, in all such cases, must be the dernier resort. And if so, why might they not as well have been admitted to decide in the first instance?

But to come nearer to the case in hand. Do any of these apologists pretend to have received any of these short abstracts from the apostles themselves? or does it appear, among all the variety of creeds which these primitive fathers have exhibited, that any one of them came immediately from the apostles?* Mr. Whiston, who, perhaps, had made as exact a scrutiny into matters of this nature as any man living or dead, and who was as likely to adopt any thing for apostolic which had the least pretence to so honourable an origin, frankly confesses, in one of his books, that "he finds "no traces of an apostolical baptismal creed "in the writings of the fathers for above three "centuries, though he makes no doubt, but "there was all along such a creed among "them, notwithstanding."†

I cite Mr. Whiston as a witness to a fact, but lay no stress upon his opinion; nor, indeed, does it deserve the least regard, after he has told us, "that in the fourth century, many "doubtful and exceptionable creeds were pub-

* Some of these creeds may be seen in Dr. Chandler's Case of Subscription.

† Reply to Dr. Allix's Remarks, p. 18.

" lickly used in the church, and did then ex-
" ceedingly disturb and confound christian-
" ity." That is to say, at, or immediately after, the very time, when he makes no doubt but they had such an authentic baptismal creed among them.

But, till some of these apostolic formularies are brought to light, what his lordship says of a *depositum*, lodged in the hands of a bishop, &c. must pass only for an inference from a *postulatum*, which, for many good reasons, and such particularly as rise from our scripture accounts of the manner in which the apostles preached and propagated the gospel, cannot be granted. And indeed, upon his lordship's supposition, that the apostles, or their companions, delivered these formularies of faith as deposits, with such variations as the cases and situations of particular churches demanded, it is next to impossible they should all have perished so absolutely, that no remains of them are to be discovered to this hour.

But, it seems, there is a way of accounting for this state of utter oblivion, into which these primitive formularies are fallen, very consistent with the supposition of their real existence for several centuries. We are told that these formularies contained a κρυφιον δογμα, a *secret doctrine*, seldom, if ever, committed to writing; the use of which was, to secure the christian brotherhood (by way of a test or tessera of true discipleship) from being imposed upon by the insidious and dissembled pretences of pagans and heretics. And to this *secret doctrine* St. John is supposed to allude, where he says, 2 Epist. ver. 10. *If there come any un-*

to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.

Some divines are extremely ingenious in discovering what the sacred writers allude to, when they allude to nothing but what is plainly expressed in the context. Look back to verse the 7th, and carry the connection of the apostle's discourse along with you to this 10th verse, and you will plainly perceive the doctrine mentioned in that verse to be this proposition, *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* ; which some persons, and those perhaps pretending to be christians, then denied.* If you refer the words, *this doctrine*, no farther back than to the foregoing verse, and suppose the doctrine of Christ, there mentioned, to be a secret formulary of doctrine, concealed among the sincere and faithful christians for the purposes above mentioned, the consequence will be, that though a brother should confess that *Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, and profess his belief of every gospel-truth, which is implied in, or depends upon, that confession, you *were not to receive him into your house, nor bid him God speed*, unless he brought this secret symbolical doctrine, which perhaps he might never have heard of. And how opposite that would be to the spirit of the gospel, needs no particular proof.

What other arguments or evidences there may be to support this fancy, I have not ex-

* See *Chillingworth's Letter to Lewgar. Life by Desmaizeaux*, p. 32. His words are these: "If you think me one of those to "whom St. John forbids you to say *God save you*, then you are "to think and prove me one of those deceivers which deny Christ "to be *come in the flesh*."

amined. I freely own, it would mortify me greatly to find such a practice fixed upon the primitive church, by any sort of evidence, which should fairly derive it from the apostles.*

* I have been informed, that the late learned Dr. John Colbatch, professor of casuistical divinity in the university of Cambridge, hath left behind him a manuscript, wherein the reality of a κρυφιον δογμα, among the ancient christians, is clearly proved. I wish such manuscript were printed. For, though I think it impossible that a secret of this kind, if ever it had any substantial foundation, should not transpire before the eighteenth century; yet such an attempt, from so learned a person as Dr. Colbatch, would certainly furnish curiosities enow to recompence the pains of reading his book, however short and unsatisfied it might leave us with respect to the main point. A casuistical divine is, by his profession, a dealer in cryptics. The plain open truths of the New Testament will not agree with certain squeamish consciences. Few people, I apprehend, carry their scruples to casuists, without having a suspicion that the gospel is against them. The doctor, to oblige or to satisfy such patients, must fetch his drugs from the hidden wisdom of the fathers and schoolmen. But I have lately been favoured with a sight of Dr. Colbatch's manuscript, consisting of forty five quarto pages, written out fair, as intended for the press, but left unfinished. The title is, *An Enquiry into the antiquity and authority of the Apostles creed.* The Doctor's hypothesis is, that this creed was delivered by the apostles themselves, and was in use, in the christian churches, even before the books of the New Testament were written. He supposes it to have been the only baptismal creed in use for several centuries; and to account for it's late appearance, he asserts, that the baptismal creed of the primitive church had no place in any other sacred office; that it was never committed to writing, but only taught by word of mouth, and learned by heart; in short, that this form of words was industriously concealed from all but baptized christians, or such as were in a readiness for baptism, and not only secreted from infidels and heretics, but from the *catechumeni* themselves, until they were of the rank of *competentes*, and not communicated to these, till about a week before their baptism. The reason why this form of words was thus secreted, was, the doctor says, that it might be a signal, or *tessera hospitalis*, by which true christians, in times of persecution and distress, made themselves known to one another, and thereby avoided impositions from such as only pretended to be christians, for sinister ends. He assigns, indeed, another use for this creed, which some perhaps may think not quite so consistent with this careful conceal-

Nothing could be more inconsistent with the nature and circumstances of their commission, or the tenor, spirit, and design of the gospel in general. Our Saviour told his apostles, that *what had been whispered in the ear* (the truths that had been communicated to them only) *should be by them proclaimed upon the house-tops.*† St. Paul puts his being *pure from the blood of all men*, upon this, that *he had not*

ment of it, namely, that of a rule to diſtinguiſh between true and falſe doctrines. But even this he finds the means to reconcile with the foregoing ſuppoſition, of its being incommunicable to all but the *competentes*, by ſuppoſing, that when there was occaſion to confute the falſe doctrines of thoſe early times openly, other creeds were made uſe of, ſuch as thoſe exhibited in the works of Ignatius, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, &c. containing the ſame articles, but expreſſed in different formularies, both with reſpect to the arrangement of the articles, and the form of words. Theſe particulars the doctor endeavours to ſupport, againſt the opinions of Epiſcopius, Voſſius, Baſnage, Dodwell, Lord King, &c. reſpectively, by authorities from the fathers, and reaſonings upon them, which ſhew that the doctor was a man of learning, and no contemptible diſputant. I thought this ſketch of Dr. Colbatch's ſentiments on this ſubject would not be unacceptable to the reader, whoſe curioſity might be raiſed by what is ſaid in the former part of this note. But here I muſt ſtop, without adding the leaſt ſtricture of my own, upon the doctor's performance. However precarious or incompetent I might think his authorities, or however infirm his reaſonings, I cannot allow myſelf the liberty to examine them, while the public has no opportunity of judging between us. I ſhall therefore only add, that along with the fair copy of this tract, there was, when I ſaw it, a conſiderable number of looſe papers, containing a large collection of teſtimonies and obſervations relative to the ſubject, which ſhew that the author had been indefatigable in this diſquiſition; and containing likewiſe, as far as I could judge, ſufficient materials to compleat the diſcourſe which is left imperfect in the fair copy. This, it is to be wiſhed and hoped, the worthy and reſpectable perſons in whoſe hands the ſaid manuſcript and papers are lodged, will, at ſome convenient time, undertake to do, as the work itſelf is in many reſpects both curious and intereſting.

† Luke xii. 3. compare Matth. x. 27.

shunned to declare to the churches where he preached, *the whole counsel of God*:* and appeals to his openness, simplicity, and sincerity† on many other occasions. In the same sense of their duty, the whole college join in prayer to God, that they may be enabled *to speak the word with all boldness*: μετα πασης παρρησιας, with all freedom; *sine involucris*, says Grotius.† And yet, it seems, they had among them a secret doctrine, reserved to be communicated only to adepts, to the initiated, and such as might be confided in: which indeed would have been reducing christianity to a paltry sect, and bringing in distinctions, which could not but have disgusted new converts, many of whom, no doubt, had taken offence at the exclusive rites and mysteries in the religions they had professed, and would, on that very account, be rather inclined to embrace an institution where every thing was openly declared, and freely communicated.

What indeed might happen in some christian societies, and, perhaps, in no long time after the demise of the apostles, I would not undertake to say, As little as we know of those early times, we have sufficient evidence of their widely deviating from the simplicity of the gospel; and all I am concerned for is to shew, that the apostles set them no such examples.

Bishop Burnet indeed makes no express mention of this secret doctrine; and whether he meant any thing of that sort by the depositum lodged in the hands of the bishop, is uncertain. But it is plain, without some such sup-

* Acts xx. 26, 27.—† Acts iv. 29.

position, the loss of an apostolical formulary of faith must be utterly unaccountable; as a depositum, in any other circumstances, must have been preserved and perpetuated with the same care and respect as the scriptures themselves.

But, admitting that there had been such a formulary of apostolical authority, and that some of those creeds, which the earlier fathers have left us, were framed after the model of it; we should certainly expect a good account, by what authority those large additions were made, which appear in creeds and confessions of a later date; the rather, as we have good reason to believe, that the shortest of the antient creeds now remaining, came the nearest to the apostolic model, in course of time, as well as in their contents.

To this the good bishop answers no otherwise, than by giving us a detail of those growing heresies, which occasioned such enlargements. He does not venture to say, that such enlargements were properly grounded upon, or duly authorised by, such occasions. He had too honest a heart, and too discerning a head, to justify such practices at all events, as some others, both before him and after him, have done. On the contrary, he says, "it had been "an invaluable blessing, if the christian reli- "gion had been kept in its first simplicity." It is not clear, to me at least, that he thought even the imputation of idolatry, occasioned by the worship of the Son, a sufficient reason for adding the words, *of the same substance with the Father*, to the creeds of the christian churches. He once more, however, says, "it

" had been a great blessing to the church, if " a stop had been put here." After which it could hardly be expected, that his lordship should enter upon a formal defence of creeds and confessions, such as they have appeared in modern churches. Decently, therefore, and tenderly, does the good man close this part of his subject, by saying, " In stating the doc- " trines of this church so copiously, our re- " formers followed a method that had been " used in a course of many ages."

And now, the vindication of the church of England being put upon this footing, it became necessary to specify the subsisting or the growing heresies, which would account for the copious form of doctrine established in our own church.

For this purpose, his lordship mentions two particular circumstances in those times, to which it became necessary our reformers should pay a particular regard.

The first of these circumstances was, " that, " when the scriptures were first put into men's " hands at the reformation as a rule of faith, " many strange conceits were pretended to be " derived from them, which gave rise to seve- " ral impious and extravagant sects. Whence " the papists took occasion to calumniate the " reformation, as if these sectaries spoke out, " what all protestants thought,—and that all " sects were the natural consequences of the " reformation, and of shaking off the doctrine " of the infallibility of the church. So that, " to stop these calumnies, it became necessary " for particular churches, and for our own " among the rest, to publish confessions of

" their faith, both for the instruction of their " own members, and for covering them from " the slanders of their adversaries."

Concerning this method of obviating calumnies by confessions, something has been said already in a foregoing chapter. But, however, as the case of the church of England was somewhat different from that of the remonstrants, it may not be improper to consider this plea, in reference to our english reformers.

And here, it must be owned, bishop Burnet has, with great justice and propriety, drawn a parallel between the slanders cast upon the protestants by the papists, and the calumnies thrown at the first christians by the jews and pagans. Popery, at the time of the reformation, was a mixture of judaical rites and traditions, and of pagan idolatry and superstition. The reformation may be called the resurrection of the christian religion, and would naturally be attended with all the consequences of the first preaching and spreading of the gospel. Here then the reformers had a precedent before them; and should have done what the apostles did in the same situation. The apostles were slandered as having taught, that *men might do evil, that good may come.* The doctrine of *free grace* was the immediate occasion of this calumny, which, for the honour and credit of christianity, demanded the most speedy and effectual refutation. What course did the apostles take in this exigency? Did they frame a new creed or confession, or insert into an old one a new article, importing, " that no " man should do evil, for the sake of procu- " ring the greatest imaginable good?" No,

they left the calumny to be confronted by the gospel-history, and the tenor of their own writings and conversation, and gave themselves no farther trouble about it.*

In like manner, had the reformers held up the bible, and said, "here is our rule of faith "and manners, and by this only we desire to

* "We find, however," saith Dr. Rutherforth, "that St. "Paul was led by it [the calumny] to write thus to the Romans, "*if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his* "*glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? and not rather* "*(as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say)* "*let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.*" Rom. iii. 7, 8." Charge, p. 8. I do very seriously assure the learned professor, that it was what the apostle Paul was *led* by this calumny *to write* in this very passage, that led me to write as I did in the *Confessional*. The only question then between us is, which of the two representations is nearer the truth? The learned professor's comment (which, I hope, I may have leave to examine in my turn) is as follows: "Care, therefore, was taken by the apostles "explicitly to condemn this doctrine, and insert an article in oppo-"sition to it, if not into any creed or confession distinct from the "scriptures, yet into the scriptures themselves." 1. "Care was "taken by the apostles;" by which we are to understand, that the epistle to the Romans was composed in a full assembly of the apostles, and that Paul was no more than the scribe of the synod; by way, I suppose, of a scripture precedent for an article-making convocation. 2. "The apostles took care explicitly to condemn the doctrine." Not in this passage. St. Paul barely relates that the doctrine was *slanderously* ascribed to them. The apostle, indeed, denounces condemnation upon the slanderers; but that gives the passage the air of a canon, rather than of an article; a distinction our learned professor should be better acquainted with. 3.—"And to insert an article in "opposition to it." I should be glad to know *where?* I am sure no such article is in these two verses, or in the context to them. The case then, as set forth in the *Confessional*, stands good, and is not at all affected by any thing the learned professor hath offered to the contrary. Whereas the representation which the learned professor gives of what happened among the apostles, upon occasion of this calumny, so far as it depends upon this passage in the epistle to the Romans, is wholly fictitious; and, if he would establish the facts he attempts to build upon it, he must look for some other authority.

" have our doctrine and practice examined;" and had they, as the apostles did, acted in conformity to that declaration, they must for ever have silenced every cavil, and every slander, which the wit of man could have devised against them.

But they were governed by other precedents; and had, no doubt, as much liberty, and equal right, to publish apologies and declarations of their faith, as other churches. This was done on the behalf of the church of England by bishop Jewel, and that so much to the satisfaction of the church, that his book passed a long time for the authentic standard of its doctrine. But whom did it satisfy or convince, except the english protestants? and what peace did it procure for them? Let the bulky volume of controversy testify (which is yet to be found in many of our churches) spun out of the bowels of this petty apology, no bigger, at its first appearance, than a three-penny pamphlet.

I hope, however, I shall not be thought to derogate from our thirty-nine articles, if I say, that this apology did its work, whatever it was, as well as that more authentic system; and, what is more, did it without being subscribed, or adopted as a test, either of ministerial or lay-communion. And, had the reformers contented themselves with this method of defence, they might have pursued it without any complaint, and without any ill consequence to their own friends. The fault we find with them is not for declaring their faith, or confuting the calumnies of the adversary; but setting up these declarations and defences, as tests of orthodoxy; and binding them upon

the consciences of those, who had as much right to dissent from them, as they had to dissent from popery; and from this charge, what bishop Burnet hath pleaded on their behalf will not acquit them.

That a variety of sects arose out of the reformation, was a matter of fact, which can hardly be considered in the light of a calumny. It neither could nor ought to have been denied. It was the natural effect of great numbers emancipated from the fetters of Rome, and restored to the exercise of their private judgment. If any of these sects were impious or extravagant in their tenets, might not some of this be owing to the intolerant spirit of some of the reformers themselves? who, by narrowing the bottom of christian communion, and establishing exclusive creeds and confessions, very probably provoked some warm spirits to those excesses, who disdained to have a new yoke laid upon them, by those very men who had so lately shaken off that of popery. To say that these impious sectaries spoke out what all protestants thought, was so ridiculous and absurd, that it deserved no other answer, but an appeal to the actual separation of one sort from another.*

* Seckendorf indeed speaks of "a sect of fanatics which spread "in the low countries, before Luther began to attack popery, and "was therefore the offspring of popery, not of lutheranism. They "kept themselves," he tells us, "from inquiry and punishment, in "that they conformed, by a wicked dissimulation, to the external "rites of the established worship, with an equal, and sometimes a "greater, affectation of sanctity, than others. Some of these had "a propensity to atheism, or libertinism; and the people afterwards aspiring to evangelical liberty, these fanatics began, under "this pretence, to insinuate their profane opinions to them, with

On the other hand, such sects as differed from each other, and kept within the bounds of sobriety and order, as they manifestly arose out of the reformation, so were they all upon an equal footing of authority. They might, if they pleased, reprobate each other in their several confessions; but they could not say in those confessions, that a variety of sects did not exist, or that such a variety ever would have existed, if the whole christian world had continued to acknowledge the infallibility of the roman church. The proper defence against such calumnies, was to say, as some of the cooler and more sensible reformers did say, that after so long a night of ignorance, and dearth of literature, it was no wonder that men should fall upon different explanations of scripture, which had been so little studied, and so carefully secreted from those who were inclined to study them; and had even been de-

" more assurance." *Hist. Luth.* b. ii. p. 30. After which, he cites a passage, wherein Luther takes notice of them, and accounts for their being so still and quiet under popery, and so troublesome after the reformation began, from the case in the parable of *the strong man armed*, Luke xi. 21.—But, without doubt, there was a variety of sects, which owed their rise to the progress of the reformation, without having any connection with these papistical fanatics, whom I take to be the same with those mentioned by Mosheim, Eccl. Hist. p. 570, under the name of mystics. For Mosheim's words, *vanitate cultus externi demonstrata*, signify only, that they taught the vanity of external worship, which they might do, and yet join in it, to avoid punishment; and that is the very thing which gives Seckendorf occasion to accuse them of a wicked dissimulation. Dr. Maclaine's translation represents them as renouncing all the acts and ceremonies of external worship; for which, I apprehend, he hath not sufficient authority from the original.

graded to the level of the decretal epistles in points of importance and authority.*

* It is a queſtion of ſome difficulty, when the church of Rome began to derogate from the authority of the ſcriptures, and to raiſe their traditions to an equality with them? It is generally ſuppoſed that pope Nicholas ordained, that the decretal epiſtles of the popes ſhould be of the ſame authority as the ſcriptures, about the year 855. But the true caſe was this: Nicholas had ſaid that the decretals of his predeceſſors ought to conclude ſome french biſhops, who refuſed to appeal to the roman ſee, upon a point controverted and decided among themſelves. The biſhops alledged, that thoſe decretals were no part of the canon law. Nicholas replied, that if this was a good reaſon for rejecting the decretals, it would afford a pretence for rejecting the old and new teſtament; for that theſe were not to be found in the code of the canon. *Du Pleſſis, Myſt. Iniq. Progreſſ.* 31.—Doubtleſs, the argument is a miſerable one; but, however, is far from implying, much more from aſſerting, that the decretals were of equal authority with the ſcriptures. Du Pleſſis indeed ſays, that pope Agatho had, 170 years before, pronounced openly, "that all decrees made by the ſee apoſtolic, ought to be re-"ceived as if they had proceeded from St. Peter's own mouth." But, as this doctrine had gained no canonical authority in the pontificate of Nicholas, it ought not ſo early to be put to the account of the church. Nor do I indeed find any formal decree to ſuch effect till the year 1415, when the council of Conſtance, in the condemnation of the 38th article of Wycliff's hereſy, ordained, "that "ſuch of the decretal epiſtles, as ſhould be found, upon examination, "to be rightly aſcribed to the popes whoſe names they bore, ſhould "be of equal authority with the epiſtles of the apoſtles." *L'Enfant's Hiſt. Counc. of Conſtance*, vol. 1. p. 229. The qualifying clauſe of examination ſhews that they were not even then without juſt ſuſpicions that the collections of *Ivo* of *Chartres*, *Gratian*, and others, were not wholly authentic. From this period, *the ſufficiency of the ſcriptures alone to ſalvation* became a formal hereſy, as appears by the twelfth of the interrogatories exhibited to Lambert in Fox's Martyrology in the year 1538. Hitherto, however, the ſcriptures ſtood upon even ground with papal conſtitutions; and the inconſiſtencies between them were kept ſufficiently out of ſight, by depriving the people of the ordinary means of ſtudying the ſacred oracles, and entertaining them only with the ignorant and myſtical comments of the monks upon them. When this would no longer paſs upon mankind, it then became neceſſary to degrade the ſcriptures to an inferior claſs. Eraſmus, in that colloquy which is intitled

The other circumstance which, according to bishop Burnet, made a copious confession more necessary for the reformed church of England, was, that concealed papists, being brought to this test, might not creep into the church unawares, and secretly undermine it. "Many" (says his lordship) "had complied "with every alteration, both in king Henry's "and king Edward's reign, who not only de- "clared themselves to have been all the while

Ιχθυοφαγια canvaſſes the point thus. LANIO: *Petrus igitur habuit autoritatem condendi novas leges?* SALSAMENTARIUS: *Habuit.* LAN. *Habuit et Paulus, cum cæteris apoſtolis?* SALS. *Habuerunt in ſuis quiſque eccleſiis, a Petro, ſeu Chriſto Commiſſis.* LAN. *Et Petri ſucceſſoribus par eſt poteſtas cum ipſo Petro?* SALS. *Quidni?* LAN. *Tantundem igitur honoris debetur reſcripto Romani pontificis, quantum epiſtolis Petri: et tantundem conſtitutionibus epiſcoporum, quantum epiſtolis Pauli?* SALS. *Equidem arbitror etiam* amplius *deberi, ſi præcipiant et legem ferant cum autoritate.* LAN. *Sed faſne eſt dubitare, an Petrus et Paulus ſcripſerint afflatu divini Spiritus?* SALS. *Imo hæreticus ſit qui dubitet.* LAN. *Idem cenſes de reſcriptis et conſtitutionibus pontificum et epiſcoporum?* SALS. *De pontifice cenſeo, de epiſcopis ambigo. niſi quod pium eſt, de nullo perperam ſuſpicari, ni res ipſa palam clamitet.* That *Eraſmus* would be underſtood to give his own ſenſe in the perſon of the *fiſhmonger*, is undeniable. With what ſincerity, is another matter. This we may depend upon, that he ſpeaks the orthodox ſentiments of the church, and gives us to underſtand, at leaſt, upon what conſiderations the precedence was given to the papal reſcripts above the epiſtles of Peter and Paul. Probably the condition, *ſi præcipiant et legem ferant cum autoritate*, might be his own. But who ſees not how idle it is to apply any ſuch limitation to thoſe decrees, which are confeſſedly written by divine inſpiration, as Eraſmus pretends here to think the pontifical decrees were? This colloquy is perhaps one of the ſevereſt ſatires extant againſt the ſuperſtitions of popery. But whence had theſe ſuperſtitions their riſe or their authority? Even from theſe inſpired reſcripts of the popes. Could not Eraſmus ſee this as well as any man?

"papists, but became bloody persecutors in "queen Mary's days."

There is, indeed, little doubt, but one main view of king Edward's reformers, in compiling the articles of religion, and requiring subscription to them, was to exclude all from the ministry who had any tincture of popery. How ineffectual this measure was for the purpose, the good bishop here confesses. And, therefore, though this may go far towards excusing Cranmer and Ridley for contriving such a test, yet it will by no means justify queen Elizabeth's bishops, who had seen what had happened in queen Mary's days, for continuing such a test any longer. Much less will any such consideration avail to excuse the imposers of subscription in all succeeding times.

Elizabeth, indeed, had very different notions from those of king Edward and his bishops, concerning reformation. She thought it right to humour the papists; and, for that purpose, made very considerable abatements in those terms of protestant communion, which were insisted on in Edward's system.

Among other things, the compilers, or the reviewers, of Edward's articles, struck out a long passage against the *real presence*. "The "secret of which, says bishop Burnet himself, "was this. The queen and her council stu- "died to unite all into the communion of the "church. And it was alledged, that such an "express definition against a real presence, "might drive from the church many who "were still of that persuasion: and, therefore, "it was thought to be enough to condemn "transubstantiation, and to say, that, Christ

"was present after a spiritual manner, and re-
"ceived by faith. To say more, as it was
"judged superfluous, so it might occasion di-
"vision. Upon this, these words were by
"common consent left out."*

Would one believe, that the same hand which wrote this passage, could raise an apology for our present articles, from the necessity of excluding concealed papists out of the church, by a test with which none of them would comply? I say the present articles, for nothing can be more absurd, than to suppose that the compilers of any other articles should profit by their experience of what had happened in the reigns of Henry, Edward, and Mary. These inconsistencies, however, are unavoidable, even by the greatest and best of men, when they find themselves under a necessity of defending ecclesiastical institutions, only because they are established.

Hitherto we meet with nothing in this introduction, to justify our reformers in establishing these articles of faith and doctrine, save only the bare excuse of following the fashion of other churches. The bishop himself

* *Hist. Reform.* vol. II. p. 406. This mutilation of the article concerning the *real presence*, was one of those things which drove the ancient puritans out of the established church. *Hist. Reform.* vol. III. Collection, p. 334. And, in these latter times, had given occasion to compliment the church of England, as holding the *real presence*, as well as her sister of Rome. See *Appendix to Dr. Parr's Life of Archbishop Usher*, p. 11. e. q. s. This is likewise one principal circumstance, which both popish and protestant writers have brought to shew the very little difference there is between the churches of Rome and England. *Vid. Francisci a Sta. Clara* (alias *Davenport*) *Exposit. paraphrasticam in articulos confessionis Anglicæ, in Art.* 38. and Heylin's Introduction to the Life of Archbishop Laud.

has as good as confessed, that there is no scriptural authority for any such practice. It has likewise been shewn, that with respect to the particular occasions of the church of England, the publication of these articles had no effect, either in silencing the calumnies of papists, or keeping such of them out of the church as were inclined, either wholly to temporize, or to meet the church of England half way.

We might then save ourselves the trouble of entering into any debate, concerning the extent of that authority by which our articles were established, and subscription to them enjoined. I will, however, make no scruple to affirm, that no such authority is vested in the church. Farther than this I shall not enquire, otherwise than as the good bishop leads me the way.

His lordship observes, "that whatever may "be the sanctions of a law, it does not alter "the nature of things, nor oblige the consci-"ences of the subjects, unless they come un-"der the same persuasion." This is particularly true of any such law, as infringes upon the privileges to which christians are intitled under the profession of the gospel; and this, we say, is the case of all laws enjoining assent and consent to human creeds and confessions, which appear not to those, of whom such assent and consent are required, to be in perfect agreement with the word of God. It is therefore of no sort of consequence, whether such creeds and confessions are established by civil authority, or by synods and convocations of professed theologues. Upon protestant principles, neither the one nor the other can

encroach, so much as a straw-breadth, upon the rights of private judgment, in matters of faith or doctrine.

His lordship indeed would seem to say something in vindication of our princes, for interposing at the reformation in a point so extremely tender and delicate; insinuating, that they did not pretend to judge in points of faith, or to decide controversies. "The part," says he, "they had in the reformation was "only this,—being satisfied with the grounds "on which it went, they received it themselves, and enacted it for the people; and "this, in his lordship's judgment, they had "as much right to do, as every private man "had to chuse for himself, and believe according to his reason and conscience."

I presume, his lordship might mean, that our princes were satisfied with the grounds of reformation, by those churchmen whose province it was to examine them. But here, I apprehend, his lordship, by an ambiguity of expression, hath put the change upon his readers, and perhaps upon himself. The true ground of the reformation was, the necessity of being relieved from the incroachments, impositions, and oppressions of popery. The abolition of these grievances, our princes (including the legislature) had not only a right, but were in duty bound, to enact for the people. When popery was out of the way, the scriptures became the rule of religion; and to say that these sacred oracles did not contain a sufficient formulary of faith and doctrine (to let alone forms of worship) without explanations of artificial theology, is degrading them once more to that

unworthy state of subserviency to human rescripts and decrees, from which the reformers pretended at least to rescue them. Had our princes, therefore, pursued the true grounds of reformation with uniformity, they should have discountenanced the introduction of scholastic doctrines and articles of faith of man's device, in their own doctors, as well as in those of the popish persuasion. They could not be ignorant, that an english convocation had no more right to prescribe to the people directories of faith, distinct from the scriptures, than an Italian council; or that a sincere english protestant could no more make his bishop his proxy in matters of faith and conscience, than he could transfer his civil allegiance, which he had sworn to the king or queen of England, to the pope of Rome.

Both the civil and ecclesiastical authority were on this, as on all other like occasions, under the controul of the word of God. The word of God had given a liberty to the disciples of Jesus, which no earthly power had any right either to take away or abridge. It was indeed the business and the duty, both of the civil and ecclesiastical power, to promote christian edification among the people, for which the word of God had made sufficient room, without breaking in upon christian liberty.

It is true, this christian liberty might be abused by absurd and licentious men, so as to endanger the peace, and subvert the order, of civil society. Here the civil magistrate has his right of interposing reserved to him by the gospel itself. A consideration, which, as it fully justifies christian princes in their demoli-

tion of popery, so likewise does it reserve to them an authority to restrain all religious corruptions and extravagances which have a like effect, and break out into overt acts of opposition to the righteous regulations of civil society; which however never can be affected, where any man or any body of men demand or attempt no more than to be permitted to believe and worship God, peaceably and sincerely, in their own way.

The good bishop would have us believe, as hath been observed, that the system which took place at the reformation, was only barely enacted by our princes, who, according to him, left it to the church to judge in points of faith, and to decide controversies. How the fact stood in some periods, I will not stay to enquire. This I know, that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth the orthodox law was, that "*religion being variable according to the pleasure of succeeding princes,* that which at one "time is held for orthodox, may at another be "accounted superstitious, &c."* A maxim which was exemplified so often, in the reigns of Henry, Edward, and Elizabeth, and in so many instances, where the church, as such, had not the least concern, that it may very well counterbalance the few cases the bishop may be supposed to have had in his eye, when he ventured this assertion with the public.

But these are points, which we are now no longer permitted to debate with the powers in being. The state and the church are cordially agreed to continue these articles as standards

* Duke's Law of Charitable Uses, p. 131, 132.

of orthodoxy, and the subscription to them as an indispensable condition of holding any preferment in the church of England. Still they are points very proper to be debated with an honest man's own heart; and from this sort of self-controversy no honest man is precluded, I had almost said can well be excused. For, if the christian religion is of divine authority, and our future happiness depends, in any degree, upon having its documents pure, and unmixed with human commandments and traditions, the man, who is in a capacity to examine into the truth, must be inexcusably rash, should he receive and embrace doctrines unsupported by these sacred oracles, merely because they are established by the powers of this world.

To help us out of the doubts and difficulties which may arise in the course of such an examination, bishop Burnet's next endeavours are laid out in explaining, 1. The *use* of the articles; and, 2. The *importance* of the clergy's subscribing to them.

By the *use* of the articles, one would suppose, at first sight, his lordship meant their *utility* to the church. But, however, without entering farther into this matter than we have already seen, and after a short digression, importing that they are not merely articles of union and peace, he proceeds to tell us, that, "with respect to the laity, they are only articles of church communion."

But I would desire to know in what instance our articles ever had any operation this way? What layman is or ever was required either to subscribe, or solemnly declare his assent to

them, as a qualification for communion with the church of England ?* Physicians and Ci-

* Dr. Rutherforth repreſents me as "ſuppoſing here biſhop "Burnet to mean, that all laymen are required either to ſubſcribe or "ſolemnly declare their aſſent to the articles, as a qualification for "communion with the church in which they are eſtabliſhed." I wiſh it were not below the profeſſor's dignity to endeavour to *underſtand* his opponents before he undertakes to *repreſent* them. The plain obvious caſe is this. Biſhop Burnet calls our articles, ſo far as the laity are concerned with them, *articles of church communion*. In examining whether they really are ſuch or no, I enquire how they operate upon the laity for the purpoſe of admitting them to, or excluding them from, communion with the church in which they are eſtabliſhed. I prove that they have no operation this way, by ſhewing that the laity in general are actually admitted to communion with the church, not only without being required either to ſubſcribe or declare their aſſent to them, but without being aſked a ſingle queſtion concerning the articles. Hence I conclude, they are not, with reſpect to the laity, articles of church-communion. Farther than this I neither did nor thought I had occaſion to enquire what was biſhop Burnet's meaning. It was ſufficient for me to have ſhewn, that whatever it was, it depended upon a ſuppoſition, contrary to matter of fact. But Dr. Rutherforth hath found out the biſhop's meaning, and hath very graciouſly adopted it; and thus explains it: "Every "layman, who is a member of any church, not only if he is perſua-"ded, that all the propoſitions contained in its eſtabliſhed confeſſion "are true, but, if he thinks that none of them are erroneous in ſo "high a degree, that he cannot hold communion with ſuch as pro-"feſs them, he is obliged to continue in its communion." *Charge*, p. 13. I wiſh the learned profeſſor hath not here ſuppoſed biſhop Burnet to mean what he did not mean. But without enquiring at this time into biſhop Burnet's meaning, let us conſider how the profeſſor's ſyſtem will be affected by the meaning he hath here avowed. As he hath ſtated the caſe, a layman is obliged to hold communion with the church of which he is a member, although he ſhould think every article of the confeſſion of that church to be erroneous, provided he does not think any article or any propoſition in the confeſſion to be erroneous in ſo high a degree, that he cannot hold communion with ſuch as profeſs it. Here it is obſervable, that the obligation to hold communion, does not wholly ariſe from the ſubject-matter of the articles, or the high or the low degree of errors contained in them, but chiefly from the *extent of the layman's charity*. A layman may be of that catholic ſpirit, that he ſhall think himſelf obliged

vilians indeed subscribe them, to entitle themselves to academical degrees, and the latter sometimes to qualify themselves for ecclesiastical offices. But suppose, any of these men should choose to forego the degree, or the office for which he is a candidate, rather than comply with his condition (and some such I have known,) would this be a sufficient reason for excluding him from church-communion? or was ever any one excluded upon any such account?

to hold communion with pious and well-meaning persons, even though he should be persuaded that all the articles of the confession, or at least the major part of them, professed by those persons are *unscriptural*, and some of them perhaps *antiscriptural*, than which there can hardly be among protestants an higher degree of error. Such laymen there have been in the world; and when that happens to be the case in any degree, what can such laymen have to do with the articles of any confession, or the articles with him? A great deal, if we believe the learned professor. For in the very next paragraph we are informed, that "the governors of the church understand the laymen to be bound in conscience to believe and practice what is contained in the confession [of the church we must suppose, with which he is in communion,] as much as the clergyman who subscribes, and solemnly assents to it." If the governors of the church are right in so understanding, they must understand the articles of the confession to be as much a test to the layman, as they are to the clergyman. And this being the case, the governors should seem to have as much right to exclude the unassenting layman from communion, as they have to exclude the unsubscribing clergyman from the office of teaching. And yet, by the professor's own state of the case, church-governors can have no such right. For the layman may dissent from all the articles of the established confession in a certain degree, and that a very high degree, and still be obliged to continue in communion with the church in which they are established. He is left to his own judgment, or rather to his own charity, for the extent of the obligation. And what have church-governors or church-confessions to do with that? Either therefore the articles of the established confession are not to such a layman, nor consequently to any layman, articles of church-communion; or we have here two counter obligations, which I fear the learned professor with all his dexterity at distinguishing, will never be able to reconcile

The bishop indeed says, that the 5th canon, which declares "those to be excommunicated "*ipso facto* who shall affirm any of these arti- "cles to be erroneous, or such as he may not "with a good conscience subscribe to, ex- "tends to the whole body of the people, laity "as well as clergy." I apprehend, that a refusal to subscribe the articles, in the cases abovementioned, amounts to something equivalent to the affirmation censured in the canon; not to mention laymen of great name and note, who, both in word and writing, have affirmed as much in plain terms. And yet who ever heard that any of these were prohibited from communicating with the church on this account, or were ever asked a single question upon the subject? Either therefore his lordship must have been mistaken in his interpretation of this canon, or here is a relaxation of discipline in the church, extremely dishonourable to her governors, and highly scandalous to her members. Be this as it may, this is a matter of fact, which proves to a demonstration, that our thirty-nine articles, considered as articles of church communion, are of no manner of use to the church, or significance to the laity. Some of our divines, indeed, have attempted to bring the laity under this obligation of assenting to article-doctrine, by way of implication. Others, however, have frankly exonerated them from any such bond, and have left church-communion upon a more righteous and reasonable foundation, by a way of reasoning, which, to me at least, looks like condemning the church for insisting on clerical subscriptions, as well as laical assent, to

human doctrines and articles of faith.* But, however that may be, the subscription of the clergy stands, it seems, upon a different footing, and, as a matter of more consequence, will demand a more particular examination.

The bishop begins this part of the case with observing, that "the title of the articles bears, "that they were agreed upon in convocation, "*for the avoiding of diversities of opinions, "and the stablishing consent touching true re-"ligion.* Where," says his lordship, "it is "evident that a consent in opinion is design-"ed." Namely (if common language is the vehicle of common sense) such a consent, as is

* Dr. Stebbing is among the former sort, who blushes not to say, "there is the same need of human explications of scripture-words, "with respect to lay communion, that there is with respect to mini-"sterial communion. For the holding the faith of the gospel, ne-"cessary in both cases, and a general belief that the scriptures are the "word of God, is no evidence of this in either." Rational Enquiry, p. 77. No evidence of what? I suppose he means, no evidence of communion with any particular church which espouses these human explications. More shame for the church which requires more and other terms of communion, than Christ himself required. But, if we may believe bishop Bull, this church is not the church of England: which, according to his lordship, "does not require the "laity to subscribe the articles, though they are as much obliged to "acknowledge the fundamental articles of the christian faith, as the "most learned doctors." That is to say, as much obliged as christians, and in *foro conscientiæ*, to acknowledge those fundamentals (not as they are contained in the thirty-nine articles, for then they would be obliged to subscribe, or give their public assent to those articles, but) as they lie in the scriptures. Which plainly implies, that the church of England thinks this general acknowledgment sufficient evidence of the communion of her lay-members with her. Dr. Stebbing might wish it had been otherwise, and when he wrote his Rational Enquiry, might hope the laity would, at some time, be bound to assent in form to these human explications. If he had any expectations of that sort, he did not live to be gratified. And that matter is just as well as it is.

absolutely exclusive of all diversities of opinions. Now the case standing thus, and the title of the articles, as well as the canonical form of subscription, remaining the same to this very hour, what possible pretence can there be for construing the act of subscription into a simple declaration of the subscriber's positive opinion, in a certain *literal* and *grammatical* sense, different from the *literal grammatical* sense of another subscriber? The casuistry that allows different men to subscribe the same set of articles, which, as they all agree, were intended *to prevent* diversities of opinions, not only in *different*, but even in *contrary* senses, must be weak and contemptible, beyond any thing of the kind that ever came from the jesuits. These pious fathers, in all such cases, bring their matters to bear at a pinch, by the help of equivocation and mental reserves. We despise and disown this practice as infamous; and yet, it seems, we can condescend to arrive at the same sort of ends, by quibbling upon the ambiguous signification of words.

Alas for pity! that, to explain and defend this mean, unmanly expedient, should fall to the share of this illustrious prelate, contrary to his own generous sentiments; as too plainly appears from the following passage, cited from a piece he was obliged to publish in his own vindication, while the sheets of his *Exposition* were hardly dry from the press.

"I do not deny but men of the Calvinist "persuasion may think they have cause given "them to complain of my leaving the articles "open to those of another persuasion. But "those of the Arminian side" [who, by the

way, were the men who bore the most tyrannous hate against him] "must be men of a peculiar tincture, who except to it" [his Exposition] "on that account; though, without "such enlargement of sense, their subscribing "them does not appear to agree so well with "THEIR OPINIONS, and with COMMON INGENUITY."*

But what cause could the good bishop give the Calvinists to complain, if there really was any good foundation for this *enlargement of sense*, either in the original design of the articles, or in any subsequent decision of competent authority? The Arminian sense is certainly not the original sense of the articles: nor is it a sense they will naturally receive. It is a sense which was never once in the heads of those who compiled them, nor of those who gave them the sanction of that act of parliament, under which they are subscribed to this present hour.

But, it seems, there is a *royal declaration* at the head of our articles, which makes a considerable abatement in the strictness of our subscriptions, and leaves room, in express terms, for these different *literal grammatical* senses.

It remains then that we examine the validity of this declaration, upon which so great a stress is laid; wherein we shall endeavour to be as accurate, and at the same time as candid as possible.

Bishop Burnet tells us, that this declaration

* Bishop Burnet's Remarks on the examination of his Exposition of the second article of our church, p. 3.

was set forth by king Charles I. "and little "doubt can be made," says his his lordship, "but it was prepared by archbishop Laud."*

That king Charles I. published a *declaration* along with the articles in the year 1630, we have the testimony of Dr. Nicholls,† who however cites a passage from it which is not to be found in the declaration referred to by bishop Burnet; that is to say, in the declaration which in his time was, and still is, prefixed to our thirty-nine articles. The consequence is, that king Charles's declaration is dropped long ago, and has no authority to decide any thing in the present question.

The declaration which stands before the thirty-nine articles in our present books, is more generally believed to have been first published by king James I. and is the same from which Dr. Nicholls says, bishop Burnet drew his inference, "that an article being conceived in "such general words, that it can admit of "different literal and grammatical senses, "even when the senses are plainly contrary to "each other, both sides may subscribe the ar- "ticles with a good conscience, and without "any equivocation."

But Dr. Nicholls believed that the force of this declaration did not, nor was designed to, extend beyond his [king James's] time. If this be true, this declaration has no right to the place it occupies. It is of no use or significance to us of the present times; nor could

* Remarks, p. 3.
† Dr. Nicholls's Commentary on the articles, p. 3.

any rule of interpretation be either inferred from it, or authorised by it.

Dr. Nicholls, indeed, gives no particular reason for his judgment. There was no occasion. The very face of the declaration shews that he had very good grounds for what he said.

The king set forth his declaration by virtue of his being supreme head of the church. But acts of supremacy, when unconfirmed by the legislature, are merely personal, and die with the particular prince whose acts they are, unless they are revived, by his successors, with the same formalities which were observed at their first appearance.

The declaration before us is destitute of all these formalities, even with respect to the prince (whoever he was) by whom it was at first set forth. There is no royal signature at the head of it; no attestation of his majesty's command, by any of the great officers of the crown; no mention of the time when, or the place whence, it issued. And that it has never been acknowledged by any succeeding prince, is evident from the following circumstance, namely, that, during the reign of queen Anne, the title of it stood invariably as it had done from the first, viz. *his majesty's declaration;* which would not have been the case, had her majesty adopted this rescript as her own act, authenticated by the specific ratification of her royal predecessors.

On another hand, the language of this declaration is such, as is absolutely inconsistent with the fundamental principles of our present happy constitution.

" We will not endure," says the declaration, " any varying, or departing, in the least de- " gree, from the doctrine and discipline of the " church of England now established."* This

* It is neceſſary, here to obſerve, that the word *now* (as far as may be judged from evidence next to demonſtrative) was not in the original declaration, but a mere interpolation, craftily enough calculated for the deception of after-times; but (conſidering the purpoſe for which the declaration was ſet forth) moſt abſurdly inſerted in the place it occupies in the common copies. This diſcovery we owe to the good offices of a ſmall writer, who was extremely provoked that this declaration ſhould be aſcribed to king James I. and who ſent us for better information to Heylin's Life of archbiſhop Laud, where, we were told, is an authentic copy, taken from a collection of king Charles's papers, intituled, *Bibliotheca Regia*. It was to this writer's purpoſe to prove ſomething or other from the emphatical expreſſions, now eſtabliſhed, and already eſtabliſhed, which occur in the common copies of this declaration. Upon examining the copy of it in Heylin's Life of Laud, p. 188. the words *now* and *already* were not to be found. This circumſtance occaſioned a longing to ſee this *Bibliotheca Regia*, which, it was ſuppoſed, could be nothing leſs than an authenticated collection of royal mandates by ſome public officer, of whoſe fidelity and accuracy there could be no doubt. But upon having recourſe to Anthony Wood, [Ath. Oxon. Vol. II. p. 282.] it appeared that this collection was compiled and publiſhed by the individual Peter Heylin who wrote the life of Laud, and conſequently, that in referring to this *Bibliotheca Regia* (as he frequently does in his hiſtory of that prelate) he was only quoting himſelf. Some little time ago I had an opportunity of conſulting this *Bibliotheca Regia*, printed, as the title page informs, in the year 1659. In the copy of the declaration exhibited in this book, the words *now* and *already* ſtand as they do in our common copies; which, as one might be ſure Heylin would not miſquote himſelf, and as it was next to impoſſible that both theſe emphatical words ſhould be omitted in his life of Laud by accident, was not eaſily to be accounted for. But being informed by A. Wood, that there were two former editions of this *Bibliotheca Regia*, the one in 1649, the other in 1650, I have no doubt but the words in queſtion have been foiſted into this laſt edition, not only becauſe as we are informed by A. Wood, [u. ſ. p. 99.] there are other alterations in the later editions of the *Bibliotheca*, but becauſe the declaration in this copy

might tally well enough with the politics of a James or a Charles; but if our princes and

of 1659 differs materially, in other inſtances, from that in Heylin's life of archbiſhop Laud. It was once conjectured, that the interpolation might probably be the work of Dr. Anthony Sparrow, and contrived to accommodate the new eſtabliſhment projecting about the time his collection firſt came out. We now honourably acquit Dr. Sparrow of that manœuvre, and muſt be contented to leave the true author of the forgery in his concealment; for that a forgery it is, appears indiſputably from internal tokens, as well as from the circumſtances above-mentioned; nothing being more abſurd than to talk of doctrine or diſcipline *already eſtabliſhed in convocation with the king's royal aſſent*, when nothing of the ſort had been done in convocation for the king to aſſent to. [See Fuller's Church Hiſtory, B. xi. § 12. and p. 131. § 65. ſub anno 1628.] We may then ſafely take it for granted, that the copy of the declaration in Heylin's life of Laud is genuine, and, as ſuch, eaſily explained by the ſentiments of the times concerning eſtabliſhments, and the archbiſhop's views in publiſhing it. The political prelate was aware, that, in the opinion of the lawyers of thoſe days, there had been no legal eſtabliſhment of forms of worſhip, or ordinances of diſcipline, ſince the demiſe of queen Elizabeth. This encouraged him, as well as left him room to introduce ſo many ceremonies from what he thought fit to call primitive antiquity; for which, though he had no preſent authority but his own, he thought he might ſafely truſt to a future eſtabliſhment; and for this, he manifeſtly intended to pave the way by this declaration, not apprehending an oppoſition from an aſſembly of more conſequence, and leſs devoted to him, than a convocation. What the ſentiments of that generation were, concerning the eſtabliſhment of forms of worſhip and ceremonies, may be underſtood from the following citation, which, it is hoped, will not be unacceptable to the curious reader, whom ſo remarkable a paſſage may have eſcaped. The author, having given account of ſome circumſtances relative to queen Elizabeth's acceſſion, proceeds thus: "the enſuing "parliament was wholly made up of ſuch perſons, as had already "voted in their words and actions, every thing the queen could de"ſire to have confirmed in the houſe: ſo as no ſide but were miſta"ken in their account; the proteſtants gaining more, and the catholics "leſs, than could be expected, to the taking the title of head of the "church, and conferring it on her Majeſty, which was thought un"ſuitable to her father and brother, and therefore far more unbecom"ing the perſon of a woman; the cauſe a declaration was not long "after iſſued out, to ſhew in what ſenſes it was to be underſtood."

people, in after-times, had persisted in not enduring the least departure from the doctrine of

[Vid. queen Elizabeth's injunctions, 1559, and the 37th article of religion.] "And to prove they more intended the limitation of the "Roman power, than to secure themselves from tyranny at home, an "act was passed, enabling the queen, and commissioners for the time "being, to alter or bring what ceremonies or worship they thought "decent into the service of God, without excepting that formerly "exploded: whereby a return (likeliest to be made use of) or a far- "ther remove was left arbitrary at the will of the queen: *whose "successors not being mentioned in the act, left room to question, "it ought to be no longer in force than her life;* for whose gratifi- "cation alone her privy council (that did then, and indeed almost all "her time govern parliaments) had intended it. But king James "and the bishops, finding the advantage it brought the crown, no "less than the church, did not only own it amongst the statutes un- "repealed and in force, but did print it, with a proclamation to "strengthen it, at the beginning of the book of Common Prayer. "Neither had the high commission any better vizard to face the ty- "ranny daily practised by the clergy, but what the authority of this "act did afford; which may one day tempt the people to a new, if "not a more dismal reformation, after experience hath taught them, "how pernicious it is to entrust either prince or priest with any power "capable of abuse: yet, to the honour of this princess it may justly "be said, that she never made use of her own liberty to enslave the "nation, but repaid, or rather exceeded, in thanks and acknowledg- "ments, all power they gave her: an art lost in these later times, or "thought unkingly. But I leave this her wisdom to be justified by "the happy success." Osborn's works, 1673. p. 414. I would not abridge this passage on several accounts, but chiefly to shew on what grounds they went, who affirmed there was no legal ecclesiastical establishment in this country from the death of queen Elizabeth, till the act of uniformity, 13 Car. II. How far a mere act of supremacy might avail towards establishing any thing, though not confirmed by parliament, I shall not pretend to say; but I hardly think it would be allowed in these days, that an act of parliament which had expired, might be revived by a royal proclamation. I imagine the churchmen themselves in King James's time, might be aware of this. The title page of Rogers's Exposition of the xxxix articles runs thus. *The faith, doctrine, and religion, professed and protected in the realm of England, &c.* Why would he not say, *professed* and *established?* Perhaps because he knew the religion of the realm wanted the sanction of parliament, and was only *protected*

the church of England, particularly as it is exhibited in the homily against wilful rebellion, what must have become of us at the revolution? Where had been our acts of settlement and limitation of the crown to king William, and the present royal family?* If the discipline of the church had continued invariable, not only the act tolerating protestant dissenters had never seen the light, but the church's censure, in his majesty's commission ecclesiastical, had been in full force, not to mention many other wholesome correctives, provided for puritans and heretics by the pious care of archbishop Laud!

The declaration, indeed, remits the offenders against it for their punishment, to the said commission ecclesiastical, as if it was still in full force. But this only serves to betray its weakness and impotence; and to shew, that it has no more authority to licence any one practice, or to prescribe any one duty, to british subjects, than an edict of the French king.

Bishop Burnet, in the pamphlet above cited, gives the following account of the occasion of

by regal power. If it should be said, that Rogers, or, what is the same thing in the present case, bishop Bancroft had no reason to be so shy, as Rogers's business was only to expound the xxxix articles, which were established by an act of parliament, viz. 13 Eliz. I answer, that they very well knew that establishment did not reach those articles which concerned government and discipline; and these the commentator took into his plan, as well as the doctrinal and sacramental articles. And there happened to be no professor either of law or divinity in those days, who would venture to stretch the act of parliament to the whole thirty-nine.

* See these questions answered, and the point they relate to handled, by a masterly writer, in a pamphlet intituled, *a plain and proper answer to this question, why does not the bishop of Clogher resign his preferments? Printed for Shuckburgh*, 1753.

publishing this declaration : " The Arminian " party (as they were called) was then favour- " ed. To these it was objected, that they de- " parted from the true sense of the articles. " But it was answered by them, that, since " they took the articles in their literal and " grammatical sense, they did not prevaricate. " And to support this, that declaration was " set forth."

Here it is not denied, that the *literal* and *grammatical* sense of the Arminians was different from the *true* sense of the articles. But how could men subscribe to articles as true, when they could not deny that they subscribed to them in a sense that was not the true sense of them, without prevarication? If therefore the declaration was not set forth to support prevarication, what was it intended to support?

His lordship, I suppose, may have given a true, though no very honourable account of the occasion of this declaration ; but it was an occasion that was given, and might be taken, in the latter part of king James's reign, as likely as in any part of king Charles's. There is indeed no evidence that James ever turned Arminian in principle. This, however, was the party that stuck to him in his measures and his projects, and which it became necessary for him, on that account, to humour, and to accommodate, by every expedient that might set them in a respectable light with the people, without bringing any reflection upon his own consistency. Whoever considers the quibbling and equivocal terms in which this instrument is drawn, will, I am persuaded, observe the distress of a man divided between his princi-

ples and his interests; that is, of a man exactly in the situation of king James I. in the three last years of his reign.

Charles I. was an avowed Arminian, upon the supposition that all Calvinists were enemies to his kind of policy, both in church and state. His father's declaration had not wrought the end proposed by the Arminians; and therefore, to make them easy, in the year 1626, he issued a proclamation, enjoining silence to all parties with respect to the points then in dispute. "The effects of which proclamation, says "Rushworth, how equally soever intended, "became the stopping of the puritans mouths, "and uncontrouled liberty to the tongues and "pens of the Arminian party."* Which is easily accounted for, when it is remembered, that the restless and factious Laud had the execution of this proclamation in his hands.

This partiality brought on so much oppression and ill-treatment of the party obnoxious to the court, that the house of Commons complained of it in their remonstrance against the duke of Buckingham, June 1628;† and not long after, namely, January 28th, 1628-9, upon the motion of Sir John Elliot, entered into this remarkable vow:

We the Commons in Parliament assembled, do claim, protest, and avow for truth, the sense of the articles of religion, which were established by parliament in the thirteenth year of our late Queen Elizabeth, *which, by the public act of the church of* England, *and by the*

* Hist. Collections, vol. I. p. 412, 413.
† Rushworth, vol. I. p. 621.

general and current expositions of the writers of our church, have been delivered unto us. And we reject the sense of the Jesuits *and* Arminians, *and all others, wherein they differ from us.**

Whether either the king or the house of Commons, in a separate capacity, have a power to interpret the articles of religion for the people, will admit of a dispute ; but that this vow, or protestation, considered as an act of state, hath greatly the advantage of the declaration in question, in point of authority, will admit of none. It is equivalent at least to any other resolution of the house of Commons. It is found among the most authentic records of parliament. And whatever force or operation it had the moment it was published, the same it has to this hour ; being never revoked or repealed in any succeeding parliament, nor containing any one particular, which is not in perfect agreement with every part of our present constitution, civil and religious.

On the other hand, here is a nameless, and, for aught that any one knows, a spurious *declaration.* It is a problem to this day in what reign it was set forth ; which is a circumstance hardly possible, if any original record of it were forth-coming, with those solemn attestations necessary to give it the weight and authority of a royal mandate.† Not to mention

* Rushworth, vol. I. p. 649.

† It is not easy to suppose that there must be some printed copy of this *declaration* still extant, of sufficient antiquity to ascertain, whether it was originally set out by king James I. or king Charles I. And it were to be wished, that if any gentleman hath such ancient copy in his study, he would favour the public with an account

those particulars in it, which are plainly repugnant to the present establishment both in church and state.

of it. On the other hand, it is next to incredible, that if any such copy had been easily to be found, two such men as bishop Burnet and Dr. Nicholls should differ so widely in their accounts of it. The former ascribes this declaration to Charles, the latter to James. And that declaration which Dr. Nicholls ascribes to king Charles I. cites the bishop of Chester's judgment concerning the wisdom and moderation of the church of England; of which bishop, or his judgment, there is not the least mention in the declaration now prefixed to our articles, which Dr. Nicholls, and I think rightly, ascribes to king James. The inducement I have to agree with Dr. Nicholls, is as follows: In 1628, king Charles, in a proclamation, calling in all the copies of Montague's *Appello Cæsarem*, declares, that, "out "of his care to maintain the church in the unity of true religion, and "the bond of peace, to prevent unnecessary disputes, he had lately "caused the articles of religion to be reprinted, as a rule for avoi-"ding diversities of opinions." Rushworth, vol. I. p. 634. Now it is absurd to suppose, that the bare reprinting of the xxxix articles *only*, would answer any such end, or indeed, that copies of the articles should be so very scarce, as to require a new edition for the purposes mentioned. Hence I conjecture, that king Charles reprinted his father's declaration (the same we now have) along with the articles, as more copies of the articles then extant undoubtedly wanted it, than had it. That this declaration was published along with these reprinted articles, appears from Sir John Elliot's speech in parliament, the January following, who cites it thus: "it is said," "(namely, "in a declaration he had just mentioned) if there be any difference of "opinion concerning the *seasonabl*' [perhaps *reasonable*] "inter-"pretation of the xxxix articles, the bishops and clergy in the con-"vocation have power to dispute it, and to order which way they "please." Rushworth, vol. I. p. 649. Now this particular is actually to be found in his Majesty's declaration, as we now have it. You will say, perhaps, "and why might not this originally be king "Charles's own declaration?" I answer, it might be so: but if it was, it is unaccountable his Majesty should not say, in the passage above-cited from the declaration of 1628, he had caused a declaration, made and published by himself, for the purposes mentioned in the proclamation, to be printed and published along with a new edition of the xxxix articles. Whereas, if you suppose that the declaration had been published, and prefixed to the articles in his father's reign, there would be no occasion for a particular specification of

It is indeed surprising, that bishop Burnet, who well knew from what court-intrigues this declaration took its rise; how grievously it was complained of by the Calvinists, and how effectually it was opposed and disannulled by the above-mentioned vow, should lay the least stress upon it. But not more surprising, than that he should ascribe the pacifying the disputes of those times, to "men's general acquiescence, in being left to subscribe the articles according to their literal and grammatical sense." History gives us little reason to believe, that those disputes were pacified in any degree worth mentioning: and if the disputants went off from their fierceness, it was only because of the tyrannical restraint put upon one side. But of what nature and extent the acquiescence has been in other respects, is sufficiently evident, in almost every controversial book that has been written in or since those days, where the least occasion or colour has been given to the disputant, to reproach the adverse party with the insincerity of his subscription.

The declaration standing upon this infirm ground, it would be doing it too much honour to examine the contents of it, and to shew, what is really the truth, that, if there is in it either consistency or common sense, it binds men to the avoidance of diversities of opinion, and allows of as little latitude of senses, as the title of the articles itself: unless there may be

that rescript, distinct from the articles. It would be reprinted along with the articles of course, and be considered as a part of the book of articles, as I suppose it is by some people at this very day.

two, or two hundred, different senses of an article, each of which may be the TRUE and USUAL, as well as the LITERAL sense of it!

There was a time indeed, when bishop Burnet accounted for the laxity of the articles upon a different footing, which, however, he has not ventured to mention in this introduction. In the second volume of his history of the reformation, p. 169, he informs his readers, "that upon the progress of the reformation, "the German writers, particularly *Osiander*, "*Illyricus*, and *Amstorfius*, grew too peremptory, and not only condemned the Helvetian "churches for differing from them in the "manner of Christ's presence in the sacrament, "but were severe to one another for lesser "punctilios, and were at this time exercising "the patience of the great and learned Melanct-"hon, because he thought, that in things in "their own nature indifferent, they ought to "have complied with the Emperor. *This "made those in England resolve on composing "these articles with great temper in many "such points.*"

The good bishop, I am afraid, says a good deal of this at random, or at least upon plausible conjecture. A few pages before, he is evidently under great uncertainty, who compiled these articles. "He had often found it "said, that they were framed by Cranmer and "Ridley; which he thinks more probable, "than that they were given out to several bi-"shops and divines, to deliver their opinions "concerning them." But, however, it might be the other way. And being under this uncertainty, how could his lordship undertake

to say with what *temper* they were composed, or by what views or considerations the composers were influenced? However, that they learned any moderation from these inedifying contests in Germany, or had respect to the sufferings of Melancthon in *tempering* these articles, is rendered utterly incredible by the following facts.

1. At the time referred to, viz. 1551, Melancthon was employed by Maurice elector of Saxony, to draw up a confession of faith, to be exhibited at the council of Trent, on the behalf of the Saxon churches. In consequence of which, the principal divines, and presidents of those churches, being assembled at Leipsic, this confession, which was no other than that of Augsburgh somewhat enlarged, was read to them, and subscribed by them, with great unanimity, and with very little opposition.* So that this season, with respect to Melancthon's dispute with Illyricus, &c. was a season of great tranquillity, the troubles with which *his* patience, and that of his brethren, was then exercised, being chiefly from the papists.

2. In the year 1548, the second of king Edward's reign, "Archbishop Cranmer was "driving on a design for the better uniting "the protestant churches, *viz.* by having one "common confession and harmony of faith "and doctrine, drawn up out of the pure "word of God, which they might all own "and agree in." Melancthon, among others, was consulted by Cranmer on this occasion; and encouraged the archbishop to go on with his design, advising him, however, "to avoid

* Hospinian, Hist. Sacrament. vol. ii. p. 373.

" all ambiguities of expression ; saying, that, " in the church, it was best to call a spade a " spade, and not to cast ambiguous words be- " fore posterity, as an apple of contention." This advice he inculcates in a second letter, proposing, " that nothing might be left under " general terms, but expressed with all the " perspicuity and distinctness imaginable." Some, it seems, thought it might be more conducive to peace, to suffer some difficult and controverted points to pass under dubious expressions, or in the very words of scripture, without any particular decisive sense or explanation imposed upon them. " This Melanc- " hon was against, saying, that for his part, " he loved not labyrinths ; and that therefore, " all his study was, that whatsoever matters " he undertook so treat of, they might appear " plain and unfolded. That this was, indeed, " the practice of the council of Trent, which, " therefore, made such crafty decrees, that they " might defend their errors by things ambigu- " ously spoken. But that this sophistry ought " to be far from the church. That there is no " absurdity in truth rightly propounded : and " that this goodness and perspicuity of things " is greatly inviting, wheresoever there be " good minds."*

Undoubtedly Melancthon was highly to be commended for his openness and sincerity. But assuredly the method proposed by him, was not the way to compose differences of opinions, or to bring disagreeing parties to any temper upon difficult and controvertible points.

* Strype's Memorials of archbishop Cranmer, p. 407, 408.

Mr. Strype thinks it probable, that Cranmer had consulted Melancthon on this very point, and judges that Cranmer was the *certain good man*, mentioned by Bucer to Peter Martyr, as of opinion, "that ambiguous forms of speech, "which might be taken in a larger acceptation, was the best means of ending the great "controversy concerning the real presence, "and of restoring peace to the church." Now, whoever had not, Cranmer certainly *had* a principal hand in framing king Edward's articles; and how likely it was that he should compose them with any *temper*, in view either of the sentiments or the situation of Melancthon, the foregoing particulars may serve to shew.

3. At the very time that Melancthon wrote these letters to Cranmer, he was in the heat of the dispute he had with Illyricus, concerning the concessions he thought should be made to the emperor, in reference to the scheme of pacification called the *interim*. These concessions, however, concerned only some rites and ceremonies, which he thought were void of superstition and idolatry; but which, in the opinion of Illyricus, ought to be opposed to the death. But, for matters of doctrine, Melancthon was as stiff and peremptory as Illyricus himself. He was the person who managed the conferences on the subject of the *interim* with the emperor's commissioners; and particularly wrote the *censure* upon it; and, indeed, from the year 1544 to the end of his life, constantly maintained, that all matters of faith and doctrine, and particularly upon the sacrament,

should be clearly expressed, and without any sophistry or ambiguity whatsoever.*

4. Bishop Burnet would have done well, to have specified what those points were, upon which these articles were composed with so great temper. Nothing of this appears upon the face of the articles themselves. As the bishop has stated the case, it would be most natural to look for this temper, where the doctrine of the *real presence* is set forth. But, in this point, king Edward's article was so rigid, that the reviewers of our system under queen

* Bayle's Dict. MELANCTHON, Rem. [L.] and in the text. See likewise *Hospinian*, Hist. sacrament, under the year 1548, and downwards. *Ludovicus Camerarius*, in the epistle dedicatory, prefixed to his edition of *Hubert Languet's* letters to his [*Camerarius's*] father and grandfather, published in 1646, after taking notice that Melancthon opened himself to Languet on the subject of the Eucharist with the most unreserved sincerity, adds this remarkable passage, with respect, as it should seem, to some suspicions that Melancthon had concealed or dissembled his sentiments on that article. *Neque enim obscurum, et à Cl.* Peucero *aliisque accuratē demonstratum est scriptis publicis, quæ in eucharisticâ illâ controversiâ, post accuratiorem cum* Oecolampadio *disquisitionem* Philippi [Melancthonis] *fuerit sententia, quam usque ad pium suum obitum constanter retinuit; quamvis eam non omnibus promiscué* διαρ'ῥηδην *(certo suo consilio usus) aperuerit. Cum contentiosis vero theologis de illo argumento rixari publice nunquam voluit. Semper enim provocavit ad doctorum et piorum virorum colloquia, aut ad communes synodos, in quibus non daretur locus sophisticis altercationibus.* Synods of protestant divines were then, we will suppose, in the simplicity of their childhood. In 1549 Languet went to live with Melancthon, whose situation from the death of Luther, in 1546, to the hour of his own death, was, with respect to his estimation in the reformed churches, most critical; so that his occasional caution, in not entering into public disputation with contentious divines, and his professing a deference for the judgment of other pious and learned men, were marks of his wisdom, as well as of his unaffected modesty, and gave him the authority and influence with the protestants in general which he so justly merited.

Elizabeth thought it proper to mollify it, by leaving out a long passage, where the decision of this matter was thought too peremptory, at least for her majesty's political purposes: and Hospinian has quoted this very article, to shew, that it was in perfect agreement with Melancthon's doctrine on the same subject. Nor indeed can it be proved by any circumstance in those articles, that the compilers of them did not clearly and decisively express themselves, upon every subject they meddled with, in the aptest and precisest terms the language of those times afforded.

And thus I take my leave of bishop Burnet's introduction; leaving the reader to reflect upon the disagreeable situation, in which a man of this worthy bishop's learning and disposition must be placed, when it is required of him to maintain, what, in his own private judgment, he is conscious cannot be maintained, without such chicane and subterfuge, as it must be most grievous to an ingenuous mind to employ. I shall now proceed to shew the ill effects of such mistaken endeavours in some still more remarkable instances.

CHAP. V.

A View of the embarrassed and fluctuating Casuistry of those Divines, who do not approve of, or differ from, Bishop BURNET's *Method of justifying Subscription to the* XXXIX *Articles of the Church of* England.

BISHOP BURNET was never a favourite with that part of the clergy who stile themselves *orthodox*. He was apt to speak his mind freely concerning such men and such things in the church, as he thought wanted reformation. His *Pastoral Care*, wherein he censured the manners, as well as the spirit and qualifications of his contemporary church-men with little reserve, and laid down rules which very few were inclined to follow, created a sort of offence which was never to be forgiven. And such was their resentment, that they disdained to be obliged to him, even for his friendly endeavours to save their credit, by pointing out the only method of subscribing the articles, which would not expose a large majority of them to the reproach of prevarication.

Accordingly, some short time after his lordship's *Exposition* was made public, the lower house of convocation fell upon it with the utmost fury, as a performance full of scandal to the church, and danger to religion. But, being happily restrained from proceeding to extremities in their corporate capacity, the charge was delivered over to a single hand, who, as they had good reason to believe, would make the most of it with the public, and who, in

the name of his brethren, pursued the Exposition with sufficient spleen, in a book intituled, *A Prefatory Discourse to an Examination of a late Book, intituled, An Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of* England, *by* Gilbert *Bishop of* Sarum, 1702.*

This writer's design being to shew, that the thirty-nine articles were framed to prevent *diversities* of *opinions*, and, at the same time, to prove the wisdom and righteousness of such a measure, it became necessary for him to appeal to the matter of fact, which he very undauntedly does in the following words:

"To the honour of the compilers of our articles, it must be acknowledged, that for "the sevenscore years last past [i. e. from "1562 to 1702] since the publication of them, "they have prevented diversity of opinion in "the church, to that degree, that LITTLE or "NO dispute hath hitherto been, about the "different senses the words may, in common and unforced construction, be made to "bear."†

Here we have a short, but at the same time a full and effectual, defence of those who compiled the articles, and of the church for enjoining subscription to them, as well as a proof of the fruitless and superfluous pains taken by bishop Burnet to reconcile men of different principles and opinions, by a peaceable and conscientious acquiescence in literal and grammatical senses. It is, indeed, the only way in which such systems, considered as tests of faith

* Generally ascribed to Dr. Binckes.

† Prefatory Discourse, p. 12.

and doctrine, can be defended. For, if DIVERSITIES OF OPINIONS and DISPUTES have not in fact been prevented by them, it is much to be suspected, that those forms may have been accessary to some disputes and divisions, which did not exist before such forms were established.*

When a candid and charitable reader, who has made any inquiry into the true state of the case, meets with assertions, which, like this, bid defiance to all history, coming from the pen of a grave writer, who does not appear to have been out of his senses, he would be willing to understand him with any favourable allowance, rather than suspect him of advancing a palpable untruth, for the sake of serving a present turn.

And, therefore, when my astonishment (occasioned by the sudden recollection of many things I had read in the authors referred to in the margin†) had a little subsided, I began to

* "It is the misery of christendom, that we should build too "much upon articles of doctrine, upon opinions, tenets, and sys-"tems; and they must be subscribed to, sworn to, and believed; "which causeth almost all the division of the christian world. We "are so earnest in asserting the orthodoxy of our own espoused doc-"trines, that we most lamentably fall out, break peace, lose cha-"rity, and wretchedly neglect the weightier matters, judgment, "mercy, and faith, and the practice of sincere truth and righteous-"ness." Strype's sermon at Hackney, September 21, 1707, p. 12. Besides what this venerable man had seen with his own eyes, his particular studies had opened to him a melancholy view of the woeful effects of these systematical tests, from the very time of their commencement in protestant churches, which he, as a true friend to his own church, has communicated for her use, but hitherto to very little purpose.

† Rogers's preface to his Exposition.——Fuller's church-history.——Heylin's Quinquarticular history.——Hickman's answer.——

cast about how this writer's assertion might be made consistent with the real truth of the case?

The first expedient for this purpose, which occurred to me, was, that this avoidance of diversity must be understood of a simple silence and acquiescence on either side, in some common and unforced construction, which, as he has expressed it, the words of the article might be made to bear. But, besides that I could see no difference between this plan of peace and bishop Burnet's *literal* and *grammatical* senses, I found it afterwards to be this author's aim to prove, that none of the articles had, or was ever understood to have, a *double meaning*. Nor, indeed, admitting such double meaning, could the articles be said to have prevented diversity of opinions, in any degree.

After many fruitless trials, methought I discerned the healing quibble lurking under the words *in the church:* the author, I suppose, being of opinion, that whoever disputed the single orthodox sense of an article, was really not *in*, but *out of the church*, in consequence of the *ipso-facto*, excommunication mentioned in the 5th of our canons; which would leave none *in the church*, but such as were all of a mind.

And indeed I very much incline still to adhere to this solution of the difficulty, the rather, as there is no other way of securing the veracity of another orthodox brother, and respectable contemporary of our own, the late

Prynne's Anti-arminianism.——Dr. Ward's letters to archbishop Usher, apud Parr's life.——Bishop Barlow's remains.——Edward's Veritas Redux.——Bishop Davenant's pieces.——Montague's and Carlton's controversy, and an hundred more.

Reverend John White, B. D. who hath laboured with great zeal and earnestness in the same occupation of defending subscriptions; and to this *sevenscore* years of peace and rest, hath, without the least hesitation, added *forty-seven* more.

The case with Mr. White was this: Dr. Samuel Chandler, at the end of his pamphlet intituled, *The Case of Subscription, &c. calmly and impartially reviewed*, published 1748, had printed the speech of the famous Mr. Turretine, spoken to the lesser council of Geneva, June 29, 1706, touching subscription to the *Formula Consensus:* the effect of which oration was, that all subscriptions to human formularies were thenceforward abolished by public authority; a promise only being required instead thereof, that the person to be admitted to the function either of minister or professor, would teach nothing, either in the church or academy, contrary to the said *Consensus*, or the confession of the Gallican church, for the sake of peace.* This precedent Dr. Chandler failed

* In a pamphlet published 1719, intituled, *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Tong, &c. occasioned by the late differences among the Dissenters*, an account is given of this abolition of subscriptions, different from this of Dr. Chandler, but not less honourable to the magistrates of Geneva, to the following effect: "In the year 1706, "a divine of Neufchâtel, Mr. *Jacques Vial de Beaumont*, a very "worthy minister of the gospel, being called to Geneva to exercise "his ministry there, was required to subscribe that numerous set of "articles [the *Consensus.*] Mr. Beaumont, instead of subscribing "as required, wrote to the following purpose: *These I assent to, "as far as they agree with the holy scriptures, which I believe to "be the word of God. I will always teach what God shall teach "me from thence; and will never, knowingly, maintain or teach "any thing contrary thereunto.*" After some debates and appeals "from one assembly to another, a form was agreed upon, much to

not to recommend, as a very proper one for the church of England to follow; which provoked the abovementioned Mr. White to make the following reply;

" Because they [the divines of Geneva] or " most of them, had swerved from the doc- " trines which they were called to assent and " subscribe to, and were therefore uneasy till

" the same purpose as that of Mr. Beaumont. To which was added " indeed an exhortation not to teach any thing contrary to the de- " cisions of the Synod of Dort, the forty articles of the French " churches, or the catechism of Geneva, for the sake of keeping " peace and union in the church," pag. 77. The material difference between this account of the abolition of subscriptions at Geneva, and that of Dr. Chandler, is, that what the latter says was a *promise* required of the candidate, the other makes to be only an *exhortation* from the ministry. A difference indeed far from inconsiderable: and, as I remember, Dr. Chandler was reminded, in a printed letter addressed to him about that time, " that, while this pro- " mise was insisted upon, he [Chandler] had no great room to boast " as he does of the moderation of the church of Geneva, such a pro- " mise, *in foro conscientiæ*, amounting to little less than a formal " subscription."* This objection does not affect a simple exhortation, against which a teacher, who should think differently from his exhorters, would always have an unanswerable remonstrance from Acts iv. 19. With respect to the matter of fact, it is difficult, if not impossible, to decide whether Dr. Chandler or Mr. Tong's correspondent were better informed. The latter, indeed, acknowledges, that he had not received an exact account how the matter was transacted at Geneva. Dr. Chandler, as coming so long after him, should know more of the matter; and that throws the probability on the side of the promise. But then can any one imagine, that Mr. Beaumont, who undertakes to teach *what God should teach him from the scriptures*, would bind himself by a *promise*, which might very possibly oblige him to *suppress* what God should teach him? Perhaps there may be a mystery in this, which our dissenters chuse not to reveal. All religious societies have their ἀπορρήτα. (See a more accurate account of this in one of Whiston's tracts.)

* A letter to the reverend Dr. Samuel Chandler, occasioned by his late discourse, intituled, *The Case of Subscription*, &c. page 71 by *Moseley*.

" their subscriptions were removed, are WE to " be called upon to remove ours? WE *who* " *have no such trouble and division amongst* " US, *upon the points to be assented and sub-* " *scribed to?*"

This is an home push indeed, and wants only the single circumstance of TRUTH, to intitle it to the honour of deciding all future controversy concerning subscriptions, in the church of England.

But in good earnest; could Mr. White be ignorant of the trouble which Dr. Clarke and Mr. Whiston met with, for their deviations from the sense of the eighth, and some others of our articles? Had he never heard of the controversy concerning Arian subscription? Could he, could any man, who has read a twentieth part of our controversies since the commencement of the current century, be ignorant, that this reproach of going against their subscriptions, has been cast in the teeth of our most eminent writers, and that too in the most opprobrious terms?* And is there, all this

* " The unchriſtian art of confeſſing the faith without believing " it; an art which, I am ſorry to ſay, has of late been brought to its " utmoſt perfection." Archdeacon Brydges's Charge, 1721, p. 9. See likewiſe a book intituled *Ophiomaches*, vol. ii. from p. 292. to 300. where great freedoms of this kind are taken with ſome of the greateſt names then in our country. The late controverſies occaſioned by Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry; *Free and candid Diſquiſitions; Eſſay on Spirit*, &c. furniſh more inſtances ſtill. Nor hath Mr. White himſelf withheld his mite from this collection. " It " is commonly ſuppoſed," ſays he, " that the creeds and articles of " the church of England are ſubſcribed only by the clergy of the " church of England. But be it known to all the people of great " Britain, that there is not in the kingdom one diſſenting miniſter, " who has complied with the terms of the Toleration, but has ſolemn- " ly ſubſcribed the articles, bating three or four,—and has alſo ſub-

while, no trouble or division among us, upon the points to be assented and subscribed to?

Why, no. The words WE and US, in the above-cited passage, relate to no body but the orthodox, who have all along been unanimous in their opinions: while they who have occasioned these troubles and divisions, and raised these doubts concerning points of doctrine in the articles, are not allowed to belong to this select number, although they continue to minister in the church of England, and some of them, perhaps, to minister in the highest stations of it.

That this is Mr. White's meaning (whatever that of the convocation-man might be) is pretty clear from the tenor of his expostulation with his dissenting adversary. "Did the "church," says he, "persecute its own mem- "bers, at any time? Were you or your fa- "thers ever persecuted, while they continued "in the church? And were they driven out "of it by those persecutions?" The pertinence of which questions plainly consists in this, that, according to Mr. White's notions, all these old persecuted puritans ceased to be members of the church, the moment they offended against canonical conformity, in virtue of the *ipso facto* excommunication, whatever external marks of church-membership they might otherwise bear about them.

"scribed the three creeds (yes, the *Athanasian*, as well as the other) "*that they ought thoroughly to be received and believed*, &c." Good-natured soul! But, happily for the dissenters, the civil powers (and not the church only) being appointed to take such subscription, are not so immediately interested in the glory of orthodoxy. White's Appendix to his third letter, p. 80.

But the misfortune of this system of Mr. White's is, that it would contract the conditions of church-membership into a less compass than is convenient for the orthodox themselves, who have by no means been uniform in their opinions concerning the sense of particular articles.

" There is not any sort of agreement," says a sensible writer, " in the notions of those two " eminent defenders of the Trinity, Dr. Waterland and Dr. Bennet; and yet *both* of " them plead very strenuously for subscription " to the articles in the sense of the church; " and both contend, that their respective notions are exactly what the church, and what " the holy scriptures teach. *Both* of them " have the reputation of being orthodox. " *Both* of them are afraid of collusion, disingenuity, fraud, and evasive arts in those " who differ from each of them.—And yet, if " the meaning of the articles be in such a " sense *one meaning*, that they can be subscribed honestly only by such as agree in " that one meaning, all, or all but one, of " those great men, bishop Bull, Doctors Wallis, South, Sherlock, Bennet, &c. must " have been guilty of these enormous crimes."*

It behoved these Doctors then to contrive plans of subscription to the articles upon a larger bottom, such at least as might serve their own turn. But, as they were all irreproachably orthodox, it was an indispensable part of their scheme to cramp and confine the heretics, in

* Case of Subscription to the thirty nine Articles considered, occasioned by Dr. Waterland's Case of Arian Subscription, p. 4.

the same degree that they made room for themselves ; a circumstance which reduced them to such quibbles and distinctions, as have rendered their meaning extremely obscure and disputable.

Let us take two or three of the most staunch and orthodox among them in their order, beginning with that celebrated champion of our church, the learned Dr. William Nicholls.

" These articles," says the Doctor, " could " not be designed to oblige all persons who are " to subscribe them, that they should agree " in every point of theology which is contro- " verted among divines."*

Probably not ; because many points of theology have been controverted among divines, which are not mentioned in the thirty-nine articles. But, with respect to every point of theology proposed in these articles, I apprehend such agreement was designed.

" No," says the Doctor, " because the thing " is impossible." But what then ? The impossibility of the thing is no proof that the compilers of our articles did not design it. How did the Doctor know, but these fathers of our church might think the thing very possible ? Or how shall we know what they did or did not design, but by their words and declarations ? The compilers themselves tell us, that the design of the articles was to avoid diversities of opinions. Dr. Nicholls comes 150 years after them, and affirms this could not be the design of them. Which of them is the credible evidence ?

* Commentary on the Articles, &c. p. 3. col. 1.

The Doctor is of opinion, " that some of " these articles were purposely drawn up in " general terms, [i. e. in terms admitting se- " veral senses] because they who compiled and " first subscribed them, were of different opi- " nions."

" *Some* of these articles."—We desire to know *which* of them? and how the articles which were purposely so drawn up, may be distinguished from those which were not? For the different sentiments of those who compiled and first subscribed these articles, if it prove any thing relative to the design of the articles, will prove, that no less than the whole set were purposely drawn up in general terms, at least if the Doctor has given us a true account of the men, to whose sentiments they were to be accommodated. " Some of them," says he, " learned their divinity from the fathers, with- " out any relation had to the doctrines of mo- " dern divines. Some went upon the foot of " Luther's and Melancthon's doctrine. Others " were perfectly wedded to Calvin's divinity, " and, perhaps, not a little to his form of " church-discipline. Some were for a *real*, " though *undeterminable*, *presence* in the eu- " charist; whilst others thought Christ's bo- " dy was only there by figure and representa- " tion." After which he goes on to ask, " can " any one say that these several persons held " no diversity of opinions?"

Rather, can any one say, that all these several persons were agreed upon any one point, delivered in any one article of the whole thirty-nine? And if none of them would agree to the passing such article or articles, as excluded

his or their own opinion, the probability is, that all and every of the articles were purposely drawn up in general terms, as nothing less would make room for the heterogeneous opinions of such a number of men, educated in so many different systems.

But mark how plain a tale will destroy this specious hypothesis. The articles were compiled by Cranmer, and at the most with the help of one or two of his particular friends. And these, out of all doubt, were all of a mind. They were then laid before the council, and by them approved, and ratified by the king. They were, finally, introduced into the convocation, not to receive any synodical authority there, but to be agreed to by subscription. And let men's private opinions be what they would, when they were given to understand that court-favour and church-preferment would depend upon their compliance, we may judge in part, from what happens in our own times, that the dissenters would not be the majority; which yet might possibly be the case, as it by no means appears that the first subscribers were all, or most of them, members of the convocation.* Dr. Nicholls suffered himself to be imposed upon in this matter, by the fabulous account of Peter Heylin, a man lost to all sense of truth and modesty, whenever the interests or claims of the church came in question.†

* See the proofs of this collected together, in *An hiſtorical and critical Eſſay on the Thirty-nine Articles*, &c. printed for Franckelyn, 1724. Introduction, p. 2, 3.

† "Our firſt reformers, out of Peter Heylin's angry (and to "our churchand truth, *ſcandalous*) writings, are made fanaticks." Biſhop Barlow's Genuine Remains Ed. 1693, p. 181.

Well, but if the compilers made the matter so easy to men of all sorts of opinions, subscription would not give the church sufficient hold of those who are put to this test. This the Doctor foresaw, and therefore puts in his cautions in time.

" Men must not indulge fanciful glosses, or " wire-draw the words in the articles to un- " reasonable senses."

But if the case really is what the Doctor hath represented it to be, I do not see how this is to be helped. Would not every calvinist among the first subscribers, think the sense of the arminian, or (as they then were called) the *freewiller*, an unreasonable sense? And if the article expressed the sense of the calvinist naturally and plainly, would he not call the different sense put upon it by the other party, a fanciful gloss? The compilers, it is plain, have left us no criterion in this matter. And if the articles were left so open and indeterminate as the Doctor's scheme supposes, no man can pretend to say what senses are *unreasonable*: unless the Doctor would have said that *all* senses but his own, are unreasonable, and then there is an end of *all* latitude.

" He thinks the force of king James's decla- " ration did not, nor was designed to extend " farther than his own time; and that, per- " haps, bishop Burnet might extend the rule " of subscribing (in any literal grammatical " sense) he drew from it, too far."

Bishop Burnet might be to blame, for drawing a rule of acting from a rescript of no authority; but undoubtedly, if the articles were purposely drawn up in general terms, that is,

so as to admit of a conscientious subscription by the men of all those different opinions the Doctor has mentioned, the rule itself cannot possibly be extended too far. Observe, however, that bishop Burnet knew of no authority or foundation for this rule, but the king's declaration. This our doctor, indeed, hath reprobated; but, however, we have no reason to complain of his abridging our liberty, as will appear by the following instance.

Bishop Burnet had observed, that, according to the form of subscription prescribed in the 36th canon, namely, " I subscribe willingly, and *ex animo*, the party subscribing " declared his own opinion, or, in Dr. Bennet's language, declared that he believed the " articles to be true in some sense."

" But," says Dr. Nicholls, " though I am " not altogether different from his lordship's " judgment in this matter, I am not so well " satisfied with the reason he grounds it upon. " For *ex animo*, in that place, does not signify " *according to my opinion*, or, *as I firmly be-* " *lieve*, but *readily* and *heartily*. For this " form of subscription is not a form of sub- " scription to the thirty nine articles, but to " the three articles contained in that canon, " which are not so much articles of *opinion*, as " of *consent* ; and the subscription to them de- " clares, not what the subscriber *believes*, but " what he *contents to*."

Nicely distinguished indeed ! so, according to this casuistry, a man may, by his subscription, *consent to* what he *does not believe* ! For this being the only form of subscribing the articles now in use, and the verbal declaration

professing no more than *assent* and *consent* to the articles, we are no more bound by our subscription, to *believe* the thirty-nine articles to be true, than if they were so many propositions taken out of the koran !

And yet, immediately afterwards, Dr. Nicholls says, " the subscriber ought to assent " to each article, taken in the literal and " grammatical sense."—But why *ought* he ? or what business has he with the *sense* of the articles, who may give such an assent and consent to them as does not imply belief ?

But it is quite necessary to take these gentlemen, every one in his own way. Bishop Burnet had said, that men might conscientiously subscribe to any literal or grammatical sense, the words of any article would fairly bear ; but he had not said what was meant by literal and grammatical senses.

This fell to the share of Dr. Nicholls, by whom we are informed from Grotius, " that " the grammatical sense is twofold, *sensus* " *grammaticalis ab origine*, and *sensus gram-* " *ticalis popularis*, the latter of which only is " to be allowed in the interpretation of any " law, or writing ; for, continues the doctor, " to take words in their first original significa- " tion, which by length of time they have va- " ried from, may carry them off to a sense " very different from what they were first in- " tended; therefore the expressions must be " taken in the plain common sense they are " generally used in, or were used in at the " time of making such law or writing."

The former part of this observation we readily allow. If the framers of a law, or a writ-

ing, make use of words in a sense different from the original grammatical sense of such words, it must be presumed that it is because such words have deviated, in popular use, to a sense different from the original sense. In which case, the sense of the framers, or composers of such law or writing, is to be adopted. But it will not therefore follow, that such words or expressions are to be taken in the sense they *are now* generally used in. Because the popular grammatical sense in which the words are generally used now, may not be the same popular grammatical sense, in which those words were used when the law or writing was made. In all such cases, we must recur to the sense of the author or the lawgiver; or else the law or the writing cannot be understood; and the modern sense of words may, in some cases, carry us as far beside the intention of the author or the lawgiver, as the original sense would do.

For example; whatever the original grammatical sense of the word *consent* might have been, it is certain that the compilers of our articles meant by it, *a consent of belief, or a perfect agreement of opinions:* and when subscribers were afterwards required to give their consent to the articles, there can be no doubt but such a consent was intended as is specified in the title, namely, such a consent as was necessary for *the avoiding diversities of opinions.*

Dr. Nicholls, on the other hand, finds, that *consent* may now signify a *consent* of *acquiescence* only, with which opinions and belief have little to do; and for this sense he accor-

dingly contends ; but with the worst luck in the world ; for the thing, with respect to which this *consent* is to be established, happens to be TRUE RELIGION ; and we may be pretty confident that the compilers never intended that a *consent* in *true religion*, which did not imply belief and conviction, should be accepted as sufficient to answer the end of subscribing the articles.

By the Doctor's distinguishing grammatical senses into *original* and *popular*, and forming his rule of interpretation upon that distinction, one would think that the grammatical sense of words, in any law or writing, could be but one. And yet he agrees with the bishop of Sarum, "that several grammatical senses may "sometimes very fairly be put upon expres-"sions in the articles." But if you may put both the *original* and *popular* sense upon the same words, of what use is the distinction? or what sense is there in his rule of interpretation?

If, indeed, as the Doctor supposes, the compilers purposely drew up some of the articles in general terms, they undoubtedly left room to put *several grammatical* senses upon the *same* words ; but then, how shall we know, which of these is the popular grammatical sense, in which only the law (or, in this case, the article) is to be interpreted?

To solve this difficulty, the learned Doctor informs us, that "a law is to be interpreted ac-"cording to the mind of the legislator ; so "that, if the compilers of the articles have "expressed themselves obscurely in any "place, that is to be explained, by what we "find to have been their avowed opinion, or

" by some other place of their writings, or " authentic books, where they have expressed " themselves clearly."

But here it is evidently supposed, that the obscurity in the article does not arise from the general terms in which it is purposely worded, but from some accidental inaccuracy of the compilers, whose avowed opinions, in their authentic books, are likewise supposed to be uniform, and consistent with each other. Otherwise, nothing can be more perplexing to the party who wants to have the difficulty cleared up, than the expedient here recommended.

For example: According to the Doctor, some of the articles are drawn up in general terms, on purpose to receive the different senses which the compilers, who were of different opinions, might think fit respectively to put upon them. Hence arises an obscurity of expression, which the subscriber to such articles wants to have cleared up. He consults the authentic books of a lutheran compiler, and there he finds the obscurity cleared up, according to the system that compiler had espoused. But the calvinist compiler hath likewise written authentic books, of equal authority with those of the lutheran, and he unfolds the mystery in a sense just contrary to that given by the lutheran. What shall the scrupulous and distracted subscriber do in such a case? or what expedient of elucidation shall he fall upon next?

But, indeed, what the good Doctor means is only this, that, if you will allow him to point

out the avowed opinions of the compilers, and to direct you to the authentic books you are to consult, he will lead you out of all obscurity, to a clear, consistent sense of an article, even though it should be drawn up in terms sufficiently general, to admit of an hundred different grammatical senses.

This is plain from the instance he brings to illustrate his general doctrine above recited, which is too curious to be passed by. It is taken from the twenty-third article, which says, *That we ought to judge those lawfully called and sent, which be called and chosen to this work* [of the ministry] *by men who have public authority given them in the congregation, to call and send ministers.*

The plain, and, if you will, the grammatical meaning of which words is, that there is a public authority in every christian church, to appoint the particular persons who are to minister in that church, exclusive of all others; and that they, and they only, who are so appointed, are lawfully called and sent.

"And yet," says Dr. Nicholls, "there can "be no doubt made, but that by public au- "thority the compilers meant the authority "of bishops."

But, if no doubt can be made of this, what shall we say of those compilers who perhaps, and of those first subscribers who certainly, were wedded to Calvin's form of church-discipline? "Can any one say that they held no "opinion diverse from this interpretation? or "can any one think that they would agree to "the passing this article, but that they "thought it was conceived in such general

"terms, that they might subscribe it with a "good conscience, and without equivoca- "tion?"

These are Dr. Nicholls's own questions; and any one has just as much right to ask them as he had.*

Let us ask another question. Have any of the compilers interpreted this article as Dr. Nicholls has done? No: Cranmer, and his fellow-compilers of the articles, (be they more or fewer) are well known to have held a friendly correspondence with the great founders and supporters of other protestant churches abroad; who had the misfortune (if it is one) to think there might be a lawful call to the ministry, without a prelacy. It is even notorious, that the opinion of these foreign divines was asked

* This hath been represented as inconsistent with what hath been said before, concerning the restrained sense of the articles, as the author seems here to be contending against Dr. Nicholls, for a latitude admissive of more senses than one. But every candid and sensible reader will easily perceive that the appearance of inconsistency arises merely from the author's arguing here against Dr. Nicholls, *ad hominem*, upon the Doctor's own principles. The sense of this article is only, that *ministers may be lawfully called or sent without the Pope's authority;* and was directed solely against the contrary doctrine, and might be subscribed by any protestant minister, whether episcopal or not. "The papists," says old Rogers, (speaking of the adversaries to the truth of this article) "albeit they allow the "assertion, yet take they all ministers to be *wolves*, *hirelings*, *lay-* "*men*, and *intruders*, who are no *sacrificing priests*, anointed by "some antichristian bishop of the romish synagogue," referring to *Concil. Trid. Sess.* 7. *Can.* 7. As to what he says before, of the anabaptists, familists, and brownists, as if the article had some respect to them, it is a mere dream of his own. The article is copied word for word from the 24th of king Edward's articles of 1552, when familists and brownists were unheard of, and when no disturbance was given, or apprehended, from the anabaptists, in this country.

by our english reformers, concerning the methods they should take in settling both matters of doctrine and discipline in their own church. And can it be supposed that Cranmer meant to say, that the ministers in these foreign churches had no lawful calling?

Dr. Nicholls himself well knew, they neither said it, nor meant it. And therefore, instead of referring us to their avowed opinions, or their authentic books, as his position required he should do, he appeals to a matter of fact, namely, "that neither by the laws of the "church, or by the laws of the realm, any "public authority is granted to any other than "bishops, to call or send ministers into the "lord's vineyard:" as if the compilers considered only what was lawful in this respect by the civil constitution and human laws of England; or as if the lord had no vineyard but in Britain.

But indeed, if we go back to the times of the compilers, the fact itself is not true. For, even so late as the 13th of Elizabeth, "every "person under the degree of a bishop, which "did or should pretend to be a priest or mi-"nister of God's holy word and sacraments, "by reason *of any other form of institution, "consecration, or ordering*, than the form set "forth by parliament, in the time of the late "king of most worthy memory, king Ed-"ward VI. or [by any other form, than the "form] now used in the reign of our most "gracious sovereign lady,—" if he took care, before the christmas next ensuing the passing this act, to qualify himself by subscription, &c. as is therein directed, was deemed, by the ec-

clesiastical as well as the civil laws of the realm, to be sufficiently called and sent, to enjoy a benefice, and exercise the function of a minister of God's word and sacraments, in the church of England itself. And there is no doubt but that hundreds, both in king Edward's and in queen Elizabeth's reign, ministered in the church of England as legal pastors, who had no episcopal ordination ; which would never have been suffered, if the doctrine either of the church or state was what Dr. Nicholls's interpretation of this article supposes it to have been.

If indeed you take the fact as Dr. Nicholls has stated it, and consider the grounds and principles upon which it stands, it might perhaps turn out, that the article cannot be conscientiously subscribed by any one, but a downright Erastian ; which however I would leave to the determination of the judicious reader, after he has duly and seriously weighed the following honest remark of bishop Burnet upon this twenty-third article :

" They who drew this article," says his lordship, "had the state of the several churches " before their eyes that had been differently " reformed ; and although they had been less " forced to go out of the beaten path than any " other, yet they knew that all things among " themselves had not gone according to those " rules, that ought to be sacred in regular " times." And so, wanting grains of allowance themselves, it was their business and their wisdom to give them to others.

Turn we now to another church-champion of casuistical memory, the famous Dr. Bennet,

whose doublings and refinements upon the articles are so various and intricate, that it would be an endless task to follow him through them all. A few of them may serve for a sample of the spirit which possesseth those who undertake to defend human establishments at all adventures.

It appears in Dr. Bennet's *directions for studying the thirty-nine articles, &c.* published in 1714, that the said Doctor was perfectly acquainted with the sense of the church upon them all: which he accordingly opens to his young student, sometimes contrary to the most obvious and natural import of the words. In one place, where he gives an interpretation of this sort, he adds, "this was infallibly the "meaning of the compilers of our articles, and "they *must* be understood in this sense."*

Upon the third article he says, "the "church excludes that sense of the word *hell*, "which says, that by *hell* is meant *the grave;*" contrary to bishop Burnet, Dr. Nicholls, Dr. Clarke, and many more.

Upon the ninth he says, "the church does "not mean, that original sin deserves God's "wrath and damnation in infants which die "before the rational faculties exert themselves;" and he says, "that they who believe and subscribe the article in this sense, "believe and subscribe more than the church "teaches or requires."

Nota bene; The article says in express words, "*original* (the title adds, *or birth*) *sin* "deserveth God's wrath and damnation, *in* "*every person born into the world.*"

* Page 62, upon the fixth article.

Upon the eleventh article he observes, "That "our church's intention and doctrine about "*justification by faith*, are abundantly mani- "fest, though they are *unhappily worded*." Which he explains by telling us, "that the "church expressed the real truth in St. Paul's "own phrase, but in a sense somewhat diffe- "rent from what he [the apostle] did most "certainly intend thereby."*

Qu. How far may a man safely subscribe this article, as being *agreeable to the word of God?*

Upon the thirteenth article he says, "that, "though the church makes use of the soften- "ing comparative words *yea rather*, and *we* "*doubt not but*, yet, the latin word for *rather* "being *immo*, the church directly affirms, that "works done before the grace of Christ have "the nature of sin."

The Doctor inquires, in another work, to what edition of the articles we are obliged to subscribe, by the act of the 13 Eliz. chap. 12?† The Doctor determines for the *new english translation*, to which queen Elizabeth's ratification is annexed, and which, out of all dispute, has the softening comparative words. We are not obliged therefore, by the statute above-mentioned, to take any notice of the word *immo*, although it carries along with it the church's direct affirmation.—But, to accumulate no more instances,—

* Perhaps the Apostle *purposely delivered* this doctrine *in such expressions as would admit of different interpretations*, to accommodate the church with *a variety to choose out of*, though he did not leave such choice to each particular person. See Dr. Rutherforth's Vindication, &c. p. 12.

† Essay on thirty-nine articles, chap. xxx.

Upon the seventeenth article, he says, "he "is so clear that the church condemns the "notion of absolute predestination in her li- "turgy, that, if that was his notion, he could "not subscribe to the use of the liturgy. And "with this the article must be consistent." He should have said, "must be *made* consistent;" for which edifying purpose, the doctor has taken a great deal of fruitless pains, to shew that the article is in perfect agreement with Arminius upon the same subject.

From these particulars it appears, that, in the year 1714, Dr. Bennet was intimately acquainted with the sense of the church, upon the obscurest and most ambiguous of the thirty-nine articles; and accordingly communicated his discoveries with great freedom, and sometimes so, that the literal import of the words of the article was by no means favourable to his construction. And where was the use or the pertinence of all his labour, if his young student was not given to understand by it, that he must subscribe the articles in these very senses, exclusive of all others?

And yet, the very next year, viz. 1715, the very same Dr. Bennet, in the 35th chapter of his *Essay on the thirty-nine articles*, in answer to *Priestcraft in Perfection*, undertaking to enquire (by what temptation infatuated does not appear) *what liberty the church allows to the subscribers of the articles?* answers, that "the church does not restrain us to the belief "of any one article or proposition, *in any* "*particular sense*, farther than we are con- "fined *by the words themselves.*"——As much as to say, that, where the words do not confine

us, the church has *no* particular sense of her own. Contrary to his repeated interpretations in his *directions*, where he over and over exhibits the church's sense, against the confinement of the words themselves; and contrary to his majesty's declaration, which the Doctor hath acknowledged for an authentic public act;* for, should the Doctor have been asked, in what sense men are allowed to subscribe? must he not, to preserve his self-consistency, have answered, "in any sense of our own, "which we believe to be true, and which the "construction of the words will admit of?"

"When an article, or proposition," says the Doctor, "is fairly capable of two different "senses, I would fain know who has power to "determine which is the church's sense?"

When the Doctor wrote his *directions*, &c. he thought he himself had this power; upon the supposition, I imagine, that the church had left no article or proposition capable of two different senses. If indeed such articles or propositions are left ambiguous, and, particularly if (according to Dr. Nicholls) they are so left of set purpose, I do not know who has any power to determine that the church in such articles or propositions, had any sense at all.

Be it observed, by the way, that Dr. Bennet perfectly ridicules Dr. Nicholls's expedient of consulting the writings of the compilers of the articles, for the purpose of clearing up obscurities in them. "For," says he, "did they "write [their books] by authority? or were all "that lived in their time of the same opinion?

* Essay on the thirty-nine articles, p. 423.

"Might not the convocation themselves dif-
"fer as much as the words [of the articles] are
"capable of admitting?"

In the 33d chapter of the same essay, the Doctor undertaking to prove, (and meaning to prove no more than) that they who subscribe the articles, are obliged to believe them true in some sense; hath brought arguments, which prove (if they prove any thing) that such subscribers are obliged to believe them not only true, but true in one and the same sense, exclusive of all others; or which prove, that no proposition in the articles has more than one sense. And thus Dr. Bennet is not only against Dr. Nicholls, as to the point of a consent of acquiescence, but against himself in the tenor of his whole 35th chapter.

1. He argues from the title of the articles, "which," he observes, "shews them to be de-
"signed to prevent diversities of opinions." But if two or two hundred men subscribe the same proposition in different senses, the design of the articles is, with respect to these subscribers, absolutely defeated.

2. He argues from the words of a canon made in the convocation of 1571, viz. *Ita tamen, ut prius subscribant Articulis Christianæ Religionis, publice in Synodo approbatis, fidemque dent, se velle tueri & defendere* DOCTRINAM EAM *quæ in illis continetur, ut* CONSENTIENTISSIMAM VERITATI VERBI DIVINI.

Now if the composers of this canon, by *doctrinam eam*, meant more than *one* doctrine upon *one* subject, they expressed themselves very ill, both as to grammar and sense. If the wording of any proposition admit of two or more

doctrines or senses different from each other, as Dr. Bennet allows to be fairly possible; and more especially if (as bishop Burnet contends) those doctrines may be literally and grammatically contrary to each other; how could they both or all be *defended* as *most agreeable to the divine word?* The church declares, she herself may not, and therefore certainly would not, suffer her sons to interpret scripture in a manner repugnant to itself. [Art. xx.] And what are subscriptions in different senses, upon the principles of this canon, more or less than this?

3. The Doctor argues from a judgment at common law, reported by Lord Chief Justice Coke, the substance of which is, "that if any "subscription is allowed which admits diver- "sity of opinions, (to avoid which was the "scope of the statute 13 Eliz.) this act touch- "ing subscriptions would be rendered of no "effect."*—The consequence is plain. Two

* The case upon which this judgment was given, was, that "one "Smith subscribed to the said thirty-nine articles with this addition, "*so far forth as the same were agreeable to the word of God.* "Whereupon it was resolved by Wray, chief justice of the king's "Bench, and all the judges of England, that this subscription was "not according to the Statute of 13 Eliz. because the Statute re- "quired an *absolute* subscription, and this subscription made it *con-* "*ditional;* and that this act was made for avoiding diversity of "opinions, &c. and by this addition, the party might, *by his own* "*private opinion,* take some of them to be against the word of God; "and by this means diversity of opinions should not be avoided, "*which was the scope of the statute,* and the very act itself made, "touching subscription, of none effect." Bennet's Essay, chap. xxxiii. p. 417. who cites Coke's Instit. 4. cap. 74. p. 324. If one should hereupon ask, does the church then, or the law, require subscription exclusive of this condition, namely, whether these articles are agreeable to the word of God, or not? I suppose, the

subscribers to the same proposition in two different senses, are of divers opinions. Admit this subscription to pass, and you render the act *of none effect.*

In one word, whatever argument in this chapter does not prove that the articles, and every proposition in them, are to be believed by every subscriber to be true in one and the same uniform, invariable sense, does not prove that the subscriber is obliged to believe them to be true in any sense.

answer would be, "No; there is a tacit condition, or proviso, implied, by the principles of every protestant church, that the conformity required be agreeable to the word of God." But then what is the meaning of the word absolute, in this judgment of lord chief justice Wray? What is the reason that, for the avoiding diversity of opinions, the private opinion of the party subscribing is disallowed? It is plain, that the tacit condition admits of private opinion, as much as if it were expressed. But so doth not the judgment. On another hand, to say, by way of salving this matter, that it is taken for granted, that all the church's ordinances are agreeable to the word of God, is to say, that it is taken for granted, that the church is infallible; for, if I conform without examination, or interposing my own private opinion, whether my conformity is or is not agreeable to the word of God, I have no other way of justifying myself against those scriptures which require examination, than by the presumption that the church cannot err. Is it not high time for our respectable superiors in church and state to reconsider these matters, and to deliver honest and thinking men, who are earnestly desirous of serving the public to the best of their abilities, from these mortifying perplexities? Where would be the harm, or the inconvenience, or the impropriety, of allowing protestant ministers to subscribe to human forms with this condition? And how much good sophistry, which might be saved for better purposes, is now squandered away in vain attempts to reconcile subscriptions without it, to the original principles of the protestant reformation?—If the *Smith* here mentioned is the same one of that name recorded by Mr. Strype, life of bishop Aylmer, p. 152. he appears, even through the shades interposed by the honest orthodox historian, to have been a worthy and a valuable man.

The sum then of Dr. Bennet's atchievements upon the thirty-nine articles, is this.

He hath proved, that the church of England has a particular sense of her own upon every one of these articles; which sense, according to the Doctor, is sometimes contrary to the natural import of the words.

He hath proved, that the church requires subscribers to these articles to believe them all, and every proposition in them, to be true in one particular sense.

And yet the same Dr. Bennet hath proved, that the same church of England hath no particular sense of her own in those articles, where the words are capable of two different senses, or no particular sense which can be discovered; and consequently that the articles may be subscribed in any sense the construction of the words will fairly admit of. Of which fairness, however, much may be said by the subscriber, to which the church perhaps would hardly agree.

Let us now see what we can make of Dr. Nicholls and Dr. Bennet in company.

Dr. Bennet asserts, "that, though we subscribe the 35th article, we don't subscribe "to the homilies. There is in reality," says he, "no such thing required of us, as a subscription to the homilies. We must subscribe the [35th] article, 'tis true; but not "the homilies."

But, according to Dr. Nicholls, the very same is the case with respect to the thirty-nine articles themselves. "The form of subscription," quoth he, "is not a form of subscription to the thirty-nine articles, but to the

" three articles contained in the thirty-sixth " canon :" " therefore," to borrow Dr. Bennet's words, " there is in reality no such thing " as a subscription to the thirty-nine articles " required of us." For the two cases are exactly alike ; and Dr. Bennet's reasons for his assertion may, with equal force and propriety, be applied to the support of Dr. Nicholls's proposition. And now, if the scrupulous subscriber is uot made perfectly easy, he must be hard to please.

However, it is not adviseable for him to depend too much on these casuists. 'Tis a slippery undertaking they have in hand ; and I am afraid that Dr. Bennet's arguments on this head prove nothing, but that he was in great concern to save his credit with the church, and at the same time to accommodate his young student, and perhaps himself, with certain convenient quibbles, when the occasion should call for them. However, he had great authorities on his side ; no less than the eminent prelates Laud and Burnet.

The former says, that, " though we [have] " subscribed generally to the doctrine of the " homilies as good, yet we did not express, " or mean thereby, to justify or maintain eve- " ry particular phrase or sentence contained " in them."

By this latitude, his grace got some shelter for the use of images in churches; and for his dissent from the calvinistical explanations of *grace, justification,* &c.

Bishop Burnet holds, that " all we profess " about them [the homilies] is only, that they " *contain a godly and wholesome doctrine.* This,

" says he, rather relates to the main impor-
" tance and design of them, than to every
" passage in them."

It is not improbable, that his lordship had some objection (as well he might) to some passages in the homilies against *wilful rebellion.*

To these Dr. Bennet hath added the opinion of a nonjuror, who says, " the doctrine of the " homilies is the only thing we are obliged to " maintain, and not the arguments brought " to support it."

But how, if the doctrine cannot be maintained without the arguments? ——— Thus we see one disclaims an *unwholesome phrase* or *sentence*, another dislikes *a passage*, a third an *argument ;* and when every one has made his particular exception, what may become of the poor homilies, who can tell ?

Dr. Bennet observes, that archbishop Laud, bishop Burnet, the above-mentioned nonjuror, and himself, do exactly agree in the sense of what the article says, touching the homilies.

Give me leave to add another to the groupe, eventhe respectable *Minraite* FRANCIS SINCLAIR, *alias* DAVENPORT, who, upon this thirty-fifth article, thus descants:

Multa quidem sunt in homiliis laude digna. Alia nec nobis [Papistis *sc.*] *vel* doctoribus eorum *arrident. Nec tenentua* protestantes *ob hæc verbo in articulo, in singula* verba *vel* sententias *homiliarum jurare.*

Whether Laud took the hint from Sinclair, or Sinclair from him, is a point not worth contesting: but I am greatly concerned to find bishop Burnet in such company. However, it

may be some excuse for him, that he sticks to the main importance and design of the homilies; which, out of all dispute, was to exclude and reprobate popery.

But what! no advocate for the poor homilies? Yes: here is one worth three dozen of Lauds, Bennets, or Sinclairs; the learned bishop Barlow.

"The church of England," says this worthy bishop, "has in her homilies (confirmed "by acts of parliament and convocation, and "subscribed by all the clergy) declared the "pope to be Antichrist. And then I desire to "know, whether they be true and obedient "sons of the church of England, who pub-"licly deny her established doctrines, which "they had before publicly subscribed."*

Would the reader know who the sons of the church were, whose truth and obedience are thus called in question? Even Gilbert Sheldon, archbishop of Canterbury; and a much honester man, the painful and pious Dr. Henry Hammond.

But there is a third sort of defenders of the church, who play fast and loose in this cause of the homilies, and seem to have taken fees on both sides.

Peter Heylin, having his objections to the strict observance of the lord's day, as taught in the Irish articles of religion, argues thus: "It is contrary to the book of homilies; and, "if it be contrary to the book of homilies, it "must be also contrary to the book of arti-"cles, by which those homilies are appro-

* Genuine Remains, p. 192.

" ved and recommended to the use of the " church."*

And yet the same Peter, (the ********* of those times, who was never at a loss, nor ever incumbered with the least diffidence) being pressed with a question from archbishop Usher, whether he admitted the two volumes of homilies into his creed? replied, " that a man " may so far take the two volumes of the homilies into his creed, as to believe as much " of them as is required of him in the book of " articles. For he may very warrantably and " safely say, that he does verily believe that " the second book of homilies doth contain a " godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessa- " ry for those times; that is to say," adds the Doctor, " the times in which they were first " published."†

That is to say, the second book of homilies, considered as a book published to serve a present turn (as bishop Burnet has it,) is a good sort of book, and may be subscribed without a qualm.

This puts me in mind of a passage, where we are told of what use and in what repute the homilies have been in these latter ages, after these our grandfathers were fallen asleep.

" As for the homilies," says my author, " they are good or bad. of undeniable autho " rity, or of none, just as they themselve " (churchmen about the year 1724) please. " Those against rebellion are particularly " good against all tumults, and disorders, and

* Heylin's *Respondet Petrus*, p. 130.—† Ibid. p. 130.

" treasons, but *their own ;* and are to be ur-
" ged home against the men whom they dis-
" like. But those against *your* idolatry and
" antichristianism, and against many of *your*
" doctrines, I assure your holiness, are of no
" account among the same men, but as the
" warm, over-hasty efforts of ignorant zeal, in
" the first reformers ; not fit to be urged
" against any true churchman (any more than
" those of the calvinistical strain) since the
" time of archbishop Laud."*

I shall now dismiss Dr. Bennet, with one parting remark upon a striking passage in the xxxvth chapter of his Essay.

" I can't but think," says he, " that if a
" man doubts of the sense of his declaration,
" whether it is such as he may mean in the ma-
" king of it, he ought, in the presence of GOD,
" to ask his conscience this question, *Do I ve-*
" *rily think, that if I were to acquaint my*
" *superiors with it, they would allow me to un-*
" *derstand my declaration thus ?* I dare say,
" the answer of his conscience would be a
" true resolution of the doubt."

* The late excellent bishop Hoadly is now acknowledged to have been the author of this severe but just reproof of the high church clergy of his time. I wish it could be said of *his* time *only*. But after a pretty long interval, wherein the fruits of a better spirit have appeared with no small advantage to the cause of the protestant reformation, there seem to be manifest tokens that the old leaven is beginning to work again as briskly as ever. Among other instances, we find the grave Mr. Professor Rutherforth going *out* of his way to peck at this humourous dedication ; impotently enough indeed, but what of that ? he shews his good-will, and will be sufficiently understood by *such readers as* (in his own elegant phrase) he *writes for*, without a *Fescue*. See Dr. Rutherforth's Vindication, &c. p. 17. Second Vindication, p. 4.

But, *I* dare say, the answer of his superior's conscience (which is one of the consciences herein concerned) would be a truer resolution of the doubt. And why should he hesitate to acquaint his superior with it; since he may do it, whenever he is obliged to subscribe or declare, without going out of his way?—Perhaps the bishop might not approve of the meaning; in which case, he must either go without his preferment, or declare in a sense he does not mean. Whereas, the matter being transacted between the man and his conscience (which will bear to be debated with more freely than a bishop might allow,) the conscience may be brought over to the side of the man, and the doubt commodiously resolved to the satisfaction of both parties.

"A man," says Dr. Waterland, "must have "a very mean opinion of the understanding or "integrity of his superiors, to suppose that "they ever can allow him to trifle at such a "rate, in so serious a matter as subscription."* —That is, to presume, upon their consent, to put a sense of his own upon a disputable article.

And this gives me an opportunity of introducing this learned Doctor's opinions upon this important case, who, having treated the subject *ex professo*, in his well-known *case of arian subscription*, and the *supplement* he wrote in defence of it, will carry us into a new field of controversy, as he exhibits much curious matter, which fell not within the notice of Drs. Nicholls and Bennet.

* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 45.

Dr. Waterland professes to set out where Dr. Stebbing and Dr. Rogers end. And these Doctors end, "in confirming our excellent "church in her full power of requiring sub- "scription to her own sense of holy scripture."*

Now these interpretations, or this sense of holy scripture, to which we are required to subscribe, are the thirty-nine articles of religion, adopted by the church, as they were left by the compilers in 1562. The sense, therefore, put upon the holy scriptures in these articles by the compilers of them, is according to Dr. Waterland, the sense of the church.

"But," says Dr. Waterland, "the sense of "the compilers, barely considered, is not al- "ways to be observed, but so far only as the "natural and proper signification of words, or "the intention of the imposers, binds it up- "on us."†

But the Doctor was told "that the archbi- "shops and bishops, or even the legislature "itself (without a new declaratory law,) can- "not determine what shall be the sense of the "doctrines in the articles."‡ And he was so far truly told. For the sense of the articles is already determined to be the sense of the compilers, and no other; the declaration and subscription to the articles being enjoined by a law, which is nearly coæval with the compilers themselves.

In this the Doctor found himself obliged to acquiesce; and, in his reply, "would not take "upon him to determine what the bishops or

* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 7.—† Ibid. p. 11.

‡ Case of subscription to the thirty-nine articles, p. 32.

" the legislature might do."*—So that, by this tergiversation, the natural and proper signification of words, and the intention of the imposers, are thrown quite out of the question; and we are once more brought back to the single sense of the compilers. For, if the bishops may not alter the sense of the articles, in virtue of any power given them by the church, or even by the legislature; neither may the subscriber, upon pretence of giving a natural and proper signification to the words.

" The sense of the compilers and imposers," says the Doctor, " where certainly known, " must be religiously observed, even though " the words were capable of another sense."†

The sense of the imposers may be always certainly known, and consequently, according to the Doctor, must always be religiously observed.‡ Which I mention (not that the sense of the imposers has any thing to do in the affair, but) to shew how by this proposition the Doctor abridged his own liberty, when it came to his turn to plead for it. The case is this: The Doctor says, " that diversity of opinions " is intended to be avoided with respect to " points determined."¶ Among *points deter-*

* Supplement, p. 4.—† Case of Arian Subscription, p. 11.

‡ " By imposers," says Dr. Waterland, " I understand the go- " vernors in church and state for the time being." But how will it be possible to know certainly the sense of our governors in church and state, upon any one article of the whole xxxix? If we go to them separately, it is possible they may give us different senses. If collectively, or in their legislative capacity, they would tell us, all that they impose, is the act of subscribing, and that if we want to know any thing concerning senses and intentions, we must go to the ministerial imposers, appointed to take the subscription; that is to say, the bishops, whose sense may always be certainly known.

¶ Case of Arian Subscription, p. 11.

minea, the Doctor reckons the doctrine of the Trinity. But, pleading for a liberty to subscribe the seventeenth and other articles in an Arminian sense, he considers these points as *undetermined.*

Whereas, by taking in the sense of the imposers, the meaning of the articles is determinable in all points ; because the sense of the imposers may be always certainly known, whatever the sense of the compilers may be.

" The article in the Apostles creed, concern-
" ing Christ's descent into hell, is now uni-
" versally understood in a sense probably dif-
" ferent from what the compilers of the creed
" intended;" says the learned Dr. Clarke.

" However that be," replies Dr. Waterland,
" one thing is certain, that our church hath
" left that article at large, intending a lati-
" tude, and indulging a liberty to subscribers
" to abound in their own sense."*

Here, if you leave out the intention of the imposers, one thing is certain, that no latitude is left to the subscriber of the article ; the words *hell* and *inferi* never signifying any thing in the days of the compilers, but the place of torment. If the intention of the imposers is taken into the account, another thing is certain, that no liberty is allowed to subscribers to abound in their own sense, unless, having deserted the sense of the compilers, they absolutely neglect the intention of the imposers, which may always be certainly known.

Dr. Waterland indeed tries to salve all this, by saying, " that the sense of the compilers and

* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 35.

" imposers may generally be presumed the " same, except in some very rare and particu- " lar cases."*

Well then, may the imposers, in any of these rare and particular cases, go against the known, or even the presumed sense of the compilers? If they may, the Doctor should have told us how they came by their authority; and why the imposers may not, upon equally good grounds, desert the compilers, in cases neither *rare* not *particular*. Besides, one imposer may think *that* a *rare* and *particular* case, which to another is not so. A third imposer may have *his rare* and *particular* cases, different from them both; and so a fourth and a fifth, till the sense of the compilers is thrown quite out of doors in every case.

Dr. Waterland, in particular, had *rare* and *particular* cases of his own, upon which he acts the part of an imposer with no ill grace.

Of the articles relating to the Trinity, the Doctor says, " their sense is fixed, and bound " upon the conscience of every subscriber, by " the plain, natural signification of the words, " and by the known intent of the compilers " and imposers."†

But of the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian creed, he says, " that the compilers sense " being doubtful, and the imposers having left " those clauses without any exposition, the " subscriber is at liberty to understand them " in such sense as the words will bear, and " such as best answers the main intent and de-

* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 11.—† Ibid. p. 36.

" sign of that creed, and is most agreeable to " scripture and reason."*

The sense of the articles, says the Doctor, concerning the Trinity, is fixed and certain. Who has fixed it? Not the compilers, otherwise than by expressing the propositions relating to the Trinity, in terms which accorded with their own ideas. And has the compiler of the Athanasian creed done either more or less, with respect to the damnatory clauses?—On another hand, the imposers have left those clauses without any exposition. And where, I pray, is their exposition of the articles relating to the Trinity to be met with?

" This instance," continues the Doctor, " is nothing parallel to the case of the arti- " cles concerning the Trinity; whose sense " is fixed and certain as before said."

That is to say, " the subscriber is not at li- " berty to understand these articles in such " sense as the words will bear; or in such " sense as best answers the main intent and " design of the whole set of articles; or in " such sense as is most agreeable to scripture " and reason." For in these circumstances, according to the Doctor, consists the specific difference, between the case of subscribing the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian creed, and the case of subscribing the articles concerning the Trinity.—And thus, kind reader, " is our " excellent church confirmed in her *full pow-* " *er* of requiring subscription to HER OWN " SENSE of holy scripture."

The Doctor proceeds: " Fix, in like man- " ner, the sense of the damnatory clauses; and " it shall soon be proved that every subscriber " ought to acquiesce in it."

* Cafe of Arian Subfcription, p. 37.

Having so good encouragement, let us try what we can do.

Whosoever will be saved, it is necessary, before all things, that he hold the catholic faith; which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this.

Then follows the doctrine of the Trinity, expressed in the articles of the creed, whose sense, the Doctor says is fixed and certain, &c. as above. After which we have some more of these clauses.

He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. And, at the close of all, *This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.*

Now what is the plain natural signification of these words? The common sense of the subscriber answers, "that you shall perish everlastingly," if you don't believe the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, *conceptis verbis.*

"No such thing," says the Doctor: "the "words are not fixed and certain; this is an "unreasonably rigorous sense of them."—Well, what is then to be done? Will the learned Doctor help us to a more commodious sense? No, but he will tell you how you may help yourself to one.

"Let any man shew," says he, "what "sense is most reasonable to understand them "in; and the same reasons (if good) shall "serve to shew that *that* was the sense of the "compiler."

We thank you, good Doctor; and will now make use of your expedient.

It is *reasonable* then *to suppose,* that a warm

dogmatical man, heated by controversy and opposition, who was presumptuous enough to lay down points of artificial theology as articles of faith, without any support from scripture, might have the assurance to consign all men to damnation, who did not believe his doctrines; having probably no other way to procure them to be received.

" No," says Dr. Waterland, " your reasons are *not* good. The creed was written " and received in an enlightened and knowing age, and consequently by a person of " great accuracy and solid judgment, who " had his information from scripture; and to " whom no passion or prejudice ought to be " imputed."

Be it so; and let us go another way to work. The sense of this creed, and the sense of the articles concerning the Trinity, is one and the same; and is a fixed and certain sense. May a man then disbelieve this sense, or put a sense of his own upon the creed or the articles, and not perish everlastingly?—If yea, I doubt this fixed sense, whatever it may be as to its catholicism, will not turn out to be the true christian faith, on the belief of which, the scriptures say, everlasting life doth absolutely depend.

Dr. Waterland might rail against prevarication, as long and as loudly as he pleased; but I am very much mistaken, if he had not as much occasion for it as any of his opponents.

But Doctors differ; and even some of the orthodox have refused this gracious liberty of subscribing the damnatory clauses in a commodious sense.

Dr. Edmund Calamy had said, in one of his *Defences of moderate Nonconformity*, " that " though the 8th article intimates, that the " Athanasian creed ought thoroughly to be " received, yet it does not necessarily follow, " that it takes in the appendages; and I may " thoroughly receive the substance of the " creed, said he, and yet abhor the damna- " tory clauses."

" That is," replied Mr. Johnson of Cranbrook, " by subscribing the whole creed, I " meant only the *middle*, and not *both ends*. " And, by parity of reason, other men may " subscribe to *both ends*, and not to the mid- " dle *."

" Strange," says Mr. Johnson, " that such " men as these should make conscience of sub- " scribing the liturgy, when, upon such prin- " ciples, they may subscribe the mass-book !"

I am of opinion, that this reflection concerned Dr. Waterland as much, within a trifle, as Dr. Calamy.

" I know," says Dr. Waterland, " many " have strained the damnatory clauses to an " unreasonable rigour, on purpose to dispa- " rage the creed."—That is, many have affirmed that the sense of these clauses is as fixed, certain, and positive, as the sense of the creed itself. Mr. Johnson is one of these; but, had it been required, I would have been Mr. Johnson's compurgator, that he had no purpose to disparage the creed.

To prove his doctrine of fixed and unfixed senses, Dr. Waterland informs us, that " a

* Clergyman's *Vade Mecum*, vol. ii. p. 121, 122.

" distinction should be made, between such " articles as, being formed in general terms, " leave a latitude for private opinions, and " such as, being otherwise formed, leave no " such latitude."*

Here the Doctor was called upon for his *criteria*, by which such different formations might be distinguished from each other; " other- " wise, his opponent insisted, the liberty might " be extended to every proposition in each ar- " ticle, which is capable of several senses."†

To which the Doctor replied: Any certain " indication of the imposers meaning is a cri- " terion to fix the sense of a proposition. When " there are neither plain words, nor any other " certain indication of the imposer's meaning, " the article, so far, is left at large, and the " point left undetermined."‡

Surely this imposer cannot be the bishop who takes the subscription: for every man may have a certain indication of the bishop's meaning before whom he subscribes, if the bishop has the use of speech to convey it. The Doctor too has acknowledged in this very pamphlet, that bishops, for aught he knows, may have no power to ascertain the sense of the articles. Who or what then is this phantom of an imposer? and whither must we go for his meaning?

When Dr. Waterland allows that there is a latitude left for private opinion in some cases, and when he supposes that some articles are left at large, and some points undetermined; he

* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 39, 40.

† Case of Subscription, p. 9.—‡ Supplement, p. 30.

should seem to mean, *so* left at large, and *so* undetermined, as to admit of different, and even contradictory, opinions and senses.

For example; the opinions of the Arminians and Calvinists, concerning conditional and absolute decrees, are contradictory opinions. If then both subscribe the seventeenth article, and each in his own sense, they must give it two inconsistent and contradictory senses.

Again; the opinions of Dr. Waterland and Dr. Bennet, the one holding the procession of the Holy Spirit (proposed in the fifth article) to be eternal, the other only temporal*, seem to be opinions flatly contradictory to each other. Would not logicians say, that to predicate *finite* and *infinite* of one and the same subject, is a contradiction? Morever Dr. Waterland thought (and indeed so think I) that the church had determined the point for him. Whereas Dr. Bennet would not allow that the church had determined either way

Would any man now suspect, that the Calvinists and Arminians subscribed the seventeenth article, and the Doctors Waterland and Bennet the fifth, in one and the same sense respectively?

Yet this is what Dr. Waterland undertook to prove. "Both," says he, "subscribe to the "same general proposition, and both in the "same sense, only they differ in the particu- "lars relating to it; which is not differing "*(at least it need not be)* about the sense of "the article, but about particulars not con- "tained in it."

* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 30.

He instances in the seventeenth article: "Imagine the article to be left in general "terms. Both sides may subscribe to the same "general proposition, and both in the same "sense; which sense reaches not to the par- "ticulars in dispute. And if one believes pre- "destination to be absolute, and the other "conditionate, that is not [on the present "supposition] differing about the sense of the "article, but in their respective additions to "it."

To this I answer;

1. That in the present case these general terms have particular ideas fixed to them by the respective subscribers, and consequently, if these are different or opposite ideas, the terms must be subscribed, in different or opposite senses: which, in this present case, reaches so materially to the particulars in dispute, that the Calvinist has no idea of any predestination which is not absolute.

2. Though this ingenious neutrality of the seventeenth article might serve the turn of the Calvinists and Arminians, yet it cannot, upon Dr. Waterland's principles, be applied to the difference between Dr. W. and Dr. Bennet. For here, according to one side, the church hath determined. Determined what? Why, concerning a particular *not* contained in the article. For, according to Dr. Bennet, "the "church never once adds the epithet *eternal* "to the word *procession*." The church then determines concerning terms *not* contained in the article, as well as concerning those that are.

3. Upon this scheme of unity, Dr. Waterland and the Arians subscribed in one and the

same sense. "They all subscribed the same "general terms, which contain the same ge- "neral sense. They differed indeed about "their respective additions to the sense of the "articles; but not about the sense of the article "itself."

No such thing, says Dr. W. "The proposi- "tions concerning the Holy Trinity, contained "in our public forms, are not general or inde- "finite, but special and determinate, in the "very points in difference between catholics "and arians; [viz.] consubstantiality, coe- "quality, coeternity, &c. and that in as clear "and strong words as any can be devised."

We shall see in the next chapter, that some of these special and determinate propositions concerning the Trinity in our public forms, may be taken in four different senses. In the mean time, suffice it to observe, that the calvinists are as positive for the special and determinate sense of the seventeenth article, as this doctor is for that of the trinitarian forms. They tell you, that for the description of the state of a man, consigned by a divine decree to an inevitable lot, exclusive of all conditions, no stronger, clearer, or more precise word can be devised than predestination; and that it is absurd, and contradictory, to talk of divine decrees controulable by contingent conditions, which would make them to differ nothing from human decrees. And is there, in very deed, any greater absurdity in qualifying the words *consubstantiality*, *coequality*, &c. with such epithets as suppose they need not be applied to different beings, so as to imply that those beings are in all possible respects absolutely such?

If such qualification may be admitted in any one respect, the propositions above-mentioned are not special and determinate, any more than the propositions concerning predestination.

Thus, we see, Dr. Waterland, by opening a door for his own arminian subscription, unwarily let in the arians at the same entrance, who would not be turned out, for all he could say to them. And, indeed, if there is prevarication on one side, it cannot be helped; it is the same case on the other. There must be the same latitude allowed to *both*, or to *neither*.

It is indeed surprising that Dr. Waterland, who very well knew that subscription to the articles is not a term of lay-communion, but of ministerial acceptance; or, in other words, a condition upon which ministerial trusts and privileges are conferred; should admit of the least latitude in subscriptions. For what are these ministerial trusts? Is not one of them a trust to preach the word of God, according to the interpretation of the church of England, specified in the xxxix articles? If these interpretations are exhibited in these articles in terms so general, as to admit of different senses, how shall any man be able to execute his trust, till he shall be informed which of these senses is the specific doctrine of the church of England? If the compilers of the articles, on the other hand, intended, that two men might raise two different doctrines from one and the same proposition, in the articles, of what use was this test? or where was the common sense of establishing it? The truth of the case, then, is just as the bishop of Bristol * hath stated it,

* Dr. Conybeare.

in his noted sermon on subscriptions. "Every one," says his lordship, "who subscribes the "articles of religion, does thereby engage, not "only not to dispute or contradict them, but "his subscription amounts to an approbation "of, and an assent to, the truth of the doc- "trines therein contained, in the very sense "[in] which the compilers are supposed to "have understood them." And accordingly his lordship, very consistently (with what solidity is another question), defends the church of England, in the exercise of her right to obtrude her own interpretations of scripture upon her ministers, to the exclusion of all others.

The staunch champions of the church of England know perfectly well that this is a true representation, both of the original intention of the church, and the actual intention of the law. And accordingly, foreseeing that it might be objected, that this power of fixing and obtruding her own interpretations of scripture upon her sons, is rather more than a protestant church ought to pretend to, they have prepared an answer, which, upon the supposition of such a latitude as is contended for, would be utterly impertinent.

Here, say they, is no inquisition, no compulsion in the case. The church of England compels no man to subscribe. They may let it alone, if they please. "All the business is," says the merciful Dr. Stebbing, "we cannot "admit you to the office of public teachers."* And a bad business enough of all conscience,

* Rational Inquiry, p. 39.

if, by this *non-admission* many an honest, pious, and learned man, is reduced to starve; which has been the case with some, and, but for this happy invention of a latitude, would have been the case with a great many more.

But, by Dr. Stebbing's leave, this is not all the business. For, when the church hath turned the poor man adrift, it may be, some body might take him in, if he could but give a good reason why he did not comply with the church. In these cases, no reason is comparable to the true one; which would be, that he could not in conscience subscribe the xxxix articles, as he did not believe them to be agreeable to the word of God. But here the church lays her hands on him with a vengeance. For, by uttering an excuse to this effect, he incurs excommunication *ipso facto;* that is (according to Lyndwood) *nullo hominis ministerio interveniente;* and is not to be restored, but only by the archbishop.

By this excommunication, the courteous reader may be pleased to know, that no more happens to the unhappy mortal, than that he is deprived of the communion, his person sequestered from the conversation and society of the faithful (meaning all who are not excommunicate;) and if his conscience should not become more tractable within forty days, he may be committed to prison by the King's writ *de excommunicato capiendo*,—where he must lie and rot till he recants; for the archbishop himself cannot absolve him, till after *repentance* and *revocation* of his *wicked error.*

All this while, the church of England *compels no man to subscribe.* That is to say, she

does not force the pen into his hand, and oblige him to sign his name *à coups de baton.* But —let us bless God for the lenity of the civil magistrate; "who," as the Rev. Dr. Jortin observes, "is of excellent use in preventing us "from doing one another any *bodily harm.*" For, that the church of England is at all out of conceit with any part either of her doctrine or discipline, does by no means appear by some late public indications of her judgment herein.

Thus stands the real naked fact; and pitiable enough it is, to make men glad of any subterfuges and expedients of latitude, even those narrow ones of Dr. Waterland. But, alas! we see by the concessions the doctor himself was obliged to make, that we are of course brought back to the single sense of the compilers; the only sense indeed espoused by, or legally authenticated in, the church of England. An hard necessity upon so orthodox a son of the church, either to be obliged to prevaricate with the naughty arians, or to be disowned by his venerable mother, as none of her legitimate offspring.

"If, instead of excusing a fraudulent sub-"scription, says the doctor, on the foot of "human infirmity (which yet is too soft a "name for it), endeavours are used to defend "it upon principle, and to support it by rules "of art, it concerns every honest man to look "about him. For what is so vile and shame-"ful but may be set off with false colours, and "have a plausible turn given it, by the help "of quirks and subtilties?"*

* Case, &c. p. 4.

I have the misfortune to think, that this wise reflection concerned Dr. Waterland, no less than those for whose immediate use he intended it. All of them were made sore by subscription. All of them wanted, and all of them applied the plaister of quirks and subtilties, in their turn.

A man of principle will never be driven to make use of quirks and subtilties, till he finds himself bound to some unreasonable and unrighteous conditions. And they who desire such quirks and subtilties should not be made use of, should be careful, not to lay snares, or stumbling blocks, in the way of honest men, that they may be under no temptation to prevaricate.

A good and conscientious christian, in matters of practice, can do little harm by his mistaken opinions. If they have no evil influence upon his own life and conversation, others cannot be far misled by them. And it is a very possible case, that such a one may be a more edifying teacher, with respect to those points which are of the utmost importance, and concerning which few men are liable to err, than he who is warmed with the most sublimed spirit of orthodoxy.

Let such a one alone to follow his conscience, and he will be sincere, faithful, and diligent in dispensing the word of God, according to his best information. But if you have a mind to make a knave of him, you cannot take a more effectual method, than to contrive tests for his disputable opinions, with which he cannot comply without quirks and subtilties; and with which if he does not comply, you

deprive him of the means of getting his bread, in the only way he is qualified to earn it.

Upon the whole; we have now seen that every system of latitude is, in some particular or other, exceptionable to every one, but the particular person who invents it for his own use. It is not possible this should be the case, if the compilers of the articles had really intended any latitude, or the laws concerning subscription had left room for it. Bishop Burnet plainly saw that subscribers were bound to the single sense of the compilers before *his Majesty's declaration* was issued, which, by the said bishop, was understood to admit of subscription in *any* literal and grammatical sense, even though it should be different from, and even contradictory to *another* literal and grammatical sense.

But, says Dr. Waterland,—"His [Majesty's] "order is, that every subscriber submit to the "article in the *plain and full meaning thereof*, "in the *literal and grammatical sense.* What? "is the *plain* and *full* meaning, more than *one* "meaning? or is the *one plain* and *full* mean- "ing, *two contradictory* meanings? Could it "be for the honour of the article, or of the "king, to say this? No—."

And so there's an end of bishop Burnet's scheme of latitude, as it rests upon this declaration. But then Dr. Waterland could work another scheme out of it for his own use, by making the *plain* and *full* meaning, to signify a *general* meaning, exclusive of all particular senses;—till, wanting to plague and starve the arians, he found out, that the sense of the

articles relating to the Trinity was *not general* but *special, particular,* and *determinate.*

If the subject were not too serious, one might find abundant matter of mirthful entertainment, in the quirks and subtilties of these eminent doctors. But should we laugh at them, no doubt but we should be told that we wounded the church and religion through their sides. We shall therefore content ourselves with recommending to them to consider, how far this ridiculous self-contradicting casuistry may have been instrumental in giving dissenters a contemptible opinion of our church and her discipline, and in making our holy religion itself (though in reality it has nothing to do either with the casuists or the casuistry) the sport and scorn of infidels.

I do not doubt but some persons will be curious to know, how it was possible for men so famous in their generation, who were so learned, judicious, and penetrating in other things*;

* We shall have the less reason to be surprised at this, when we duly weigh a reflection of the excellent Dr. Lardner's upon some passages of Zosimus. "We have here," says this respectable writer, "another proof, that the change of religion was continually, "*upon all occasions*, represented as hazardous to the state. And "we may farther observe, that no religion can be so absurd and un- "reasonable, especially *when it has been established*, and *of a long* "*time*, that will not find men of good abilities, not only to *palliate* "and *excuse*, but also to *approve*, and *justify*, and *recommend* its "greatest absurdities." *Collection of Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*, vol. iv. p. 274. Dr, Rutherforth hath said, Charge, p. 5. "Take away the legal emoluments of the ministry, and though you "leave subscriptions, these useful ministers, *as they are called*, will "make no complaint of their being under the dilemma of either "subscribing to our articles, or of not enjoying the liberty of preach- "ing the gospel." Legal emoluments have, I conjecture, as fast hold upon orthodox, as heretical spirits; and one might say with

and who all thought they were driving the same nail, to be so contradictory and inconsistent, not only with each other, but even with themselves? Let such curious enquirers know then, that all these experienced workmen were endeavouring to repair, and *daub with untempered mortar*, certain *strong-holds* and *partition-walls*, which it was the design of the gospel to throw down and to level. An attempt of this sort could hardly be more agreeable to the divine will, than the building at *Babel*. And no marvel that the *craftsmen* should meet with the like success. That is to say, that their language should be confounded, and rendered unintelligible, both to each other, and to all who are otherwise concerned to understand it.

It is true, these particular doctors are all gone off the stage: but they have left plenty of disciples behind them, who affect to speak the jargon of their respective masters. And it is certain, that, while our subscriptions continue upon the present footing, there will be no end of accusing on one side, or of recriminating on the other. Let us, at length, come to some temper with each other; and, if a form of words cannot be agreed upon, which every christian minister may subscribe willingly, and with a good conscience, let us join in a petition

equal truth and justice, "take away the legal emoluments from the "miniſtry, and though you leave ſubſcriptions, few would be at the "pains to defend them." Zoſimus indeed appears to have been diſintereſted, but he was a bigoted pagan, "a poor ſuperſtitious "creature," as Dr. Bentley called him. It is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that legal emoluments in poſſeſſion, and ſtill greater in expectation, may ſharpen a dulliſh genius, and give portions of apprehenſion and abilities, on ſome ſubjects, even where nature has denied them on all others,

to the legislature, that the expedient proposed, not long ago, in one of our monthly pamphlets, may receive the sanction of law; namely, that the affair of subscription should henceforth be considered in no other light, than as *an office of insurance for our respective preferments.*

CHAP. VI.

A particular examination of the sentiments and reasonings of those writers who have pleaded for a latitude in subscribing to the articles and liturgy of the church of England, *upon the supposition that every protestant church must act consistently with its professing to assert and maintain christian liberty.*

I AM now entering, not without regret, upon the most disagreeable part of my undertaking, namely, that of declaring, and giving reasons for my dissatisfaction with such arguments, as the sons of truth and liberty have offered, by way of justifying their compliance with the church in this demand of subscription to her liturgy and articles.

When we consider the irresistible force and perspicuity of that reasoning, by which some of these worthies (when debating the question concerning church-power in the abstract) have demonstrated the unreasonableness of that demand, as well as the inconsistency of it with the professions of every protestant church, one cannot but lament, that, to the laurels they gained in that disputation, they did not add the glory of becoming confessors to their own principles, and of rather declining the affluence of a plentiful income, or the figure of a superior station, than accept of these emoluments on conditions, which must have been imposed

upon them with some violence to their inclinations.

It is true, some of these have said, that "the reasonableness of conformity to the "church of England is perfectly consistent "with the rights of private judgment."* But they must only mean, of their own private judgment. For it is well known, that others, who dissent from the church of England, are clearly justified in such dissent, upon those very principles which these conforming writers have laid down; and consequently, the nonconformity of the one is just as reasonable as the conformity of the other. On the other hand, it is equally well known that the most eminent and successful defenders of our church-establishment, are they who have attacked these principles of liberty, and have proceeded upon the supposition that the private judgment of individuals ought to give way to the authority of the church; being well aware that, if these theories of christian liberty are allowed to stand upon a firm foundation, it would be impossible to vindicate the church of England, with respect to the particulars of her constitution. And therefore, I must own, I never could see how the authors and defenders of these theories could make their conformity consistent with the enjoyment of their rights of private judgment, otherwise than by supposing that it might be reasonable for them to submit to conditions, which it is unreasonable in the church to impose.

* Dr. Sykes's answer to Roger's Visible and Invisible Church of Christ, p. 6.

In the mean time, their adversaries have long and loudly accused them of prevarication, in complying with the church; which, whether the accusation be just or not, has certainly taken much from the influence they might have had, both with the true friends of christian liberty, and the partial and prejudiced retainers to church power. On which account it has been a great misfortune to the present generation, and will be a greater to the next, that these gentlemen did not stand aloof a little longer, till they had tried at least what concessions the church would have made them, rather than have wanted their services, which, under all disadvantages, have been so great an honour and ornament to her.

What might not the firmness of an Hales and a Chillingworth formerly, or more lately of a Clarke or an Hoadly, have obtained for us by this time? Which of us all, abused and vilified as these men have been, by bigots of different classes, would have wished to have seen them in another communion? And who is he that will affirm, the church established has lost nothing by depriving these champions of the power of adding to their victories over the spiritual tyranny of Rome, a complete and solid vindication of her own doctrine, discipline, and worship?

But that day is past and gone beyond recall; with this cold comfort indeed, that these worthy men have left their principles to those among us who are inclined to profit by them. From these principles, compared with their practice, we cannot but judge they were under some small constraint, touching the subject

now in hand. And if it should be found, upon a fair examination, that, for the sake of preserving the appearance of consistency, they have set their apologies for subscribing in a light which has thrown back the real truth into shade and obscurity, it is but justice to bring it once more forward to public view; if haply a circumstance in our discipline, which has more or less turned to our reproach with dissenters of all denominations, may at length be either quite discarded, or put into a condition fit to be owned by every honest man and sincere protestant among us.

The controversy with Dr. Waterland, concerning what he thought fit to call Arian subscription, took its rise, it seems, from some passages in Dr. Clarke's Introduction to his *Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity*, wherein that learned and excellent person (conscious that the contents of his book would hardly be thought to agree with the established forms of the church) thought proper to apprize his readers, that the church of England did not mean more by subscription, nor require more of subscribers, than that they should conform their opinions to the true sense of scripture; the investigation of which sense, he supposes, was by the church left to the subscriber himself; otherwise, that the church must be inconsistent with her own plain and repeated declarations.

With Dr. Clarke therefore we shall begin; the rather as Dr. Clarke's reasonings upon this subject have prevailed with some to comply with the church's subscription, who are now

ready to own that they think those reasonings insufficient for their justification.

The Doctor's state of the case then is briefly this: "At the reformation, religion began to "recover, in a great measure, out of the great "apostacy: when the doctrine of Christ and "his Apostles was again declared to be the "only rule of truth, in which were contained "all things necessary to faith and manners. "And had that declaration constantly been "adhered to, and human authority in matters "of faith been disclaimed in DEEDS as well as "in WORDS, there had been possibly no more "schisms in the church of God, nor divisions "of any considerable moment among protes-"tants.—But, though contentions and un-"charitableness have prevailed in practice, "yet (thanks be to God) the root of unity "hath continued amongst us; and the scrip-"ture hath universally been declared to be the "only rule of truth, a sufficient guide both in "faith and practice; and those who differ in "opinion, have done so only because each "party has thought their own opinion founded "in scripture; and men are required to receive "things because, and only because, they are "found (and consequently *in no other sense* "than [that] wherein they are found) in the "holy scriptures. Wherefore, in any question "of controversy concerning a matter of faith, "protestants are obliged (for the deciding of "it) to have recourse to no other authority "whatsoever, but that of scripture only."*

This is specious: and the time was, as I said, when, by this deduction of particulars, the Doctor seemed to me to be fairly entitled to

* Introduct. to Script. Doct. of the Trinity, Ed. 2. p. viii, ix, x.

his consequence; which is, that a man may honestly subscribe the thirty-nine articles of the church of England, accommodated to the sense of scripture, as he himself understands it. And certainly words and oaths cannot disclaim human authority, in matters of faith, with more vehemence and precision, whether on the part of the church, or some of her most eminent doctors, than is done in the citations that follow this representation.

But, upon having recourse to these passages upon a second occasion, a sudden question forced itself upon me, and would take no denial; viz. How stand the DEEDS in the church of England? *These*, WORDS indeed are plain; but is there nothing in the *acts* and *deeds* of this church, which implies that *these* are *but* words? And are there no other words, which directly unsay what is said in these? Why yes. It will be found, upon examination, that the DEEDS of the church of England are very plain and strong on the side of human authority, disclaiming in their turn these verbal declarations of the protestant religion, by many formal acts and ordinances, and contravening them in some instances, where there seems to be some outward respect paid to them.

Men, it is true, are required to receive things for no other given cause, and upon no other declared authority, than because they are found in scripture, and in no other sense but that in which they are said to be so found. But, in fact, we are allowed to receive these things in no other sense, than that in which

the church declares she hath found them herself; which is sometimes a sense, that the person obliged to receive it is not able to find, let him search for it with ever so much capacity and diligence. So that, though protestants are obliged by their original principles to adhere to no other authority whatever than that of the scripture; yet, by coming under posterior engagements and stipulations with the church of England by law established, and particularly by acknowledging that this church *hath authority in controversies of faith*, they are obliged to take her interpretations of scripture, not only in preference to, but in exclusion of their own.

Dr. Waterland indeed says, "that no man "is required by the church to subscribe [that "is, to receive things] against his conscience, "or in a sense which he thinks not agreeable "to scripture."*

That is to say, if a man cannot bring himself to subscribe in the church's sense, as thinking that sense not agreeable to scripture, he may let subscribing alone, without any censure or punishment.

But Dr. Waterland knew very well, and so did Dr. Clarke too, that such a one refusing to subscribe, or to receive things in the church's sense, would be understood, in that instance, to decline any engagements with the church, and, in so doing, to forfeit all the advantages that would have accrued from his compliance; which may happen to be his whole livelihood.

* Case, p. 16.

Dr. Waterland could not mean, that the church censures no man for subscribing in a sense which he thinks agreeable to scripture, but contrary to the church's sense. For he himself hath shewn the contrary, especially where such subscriber avows his own sense. And, with respect to other cases, the doctor observes very pertinently, that "the connivance and toleration of superiors at offences "does not take away the guilt of such offences."* The prescribed form of subscription plainly supposes the man who sets his name to it, to subscribe in the church's sense: and what occasion or what room have superiors either to exercise or declare any censures, when the subscriber signs his name quietly and peaceably to the prescribed form, without saying a syllable against it?

Dr. Clarke says, "If tradition, custom, "carelessness, or mistake, have put a sense "upon human forms, disagreeable to scripture, "a man is indispensably bound not to understand or receive them in that sense."†

That is, indispensably bound in conscience. True. But if that mistaken sense is not barely put there by a private and mistaken man, but bound upon, and incorporated with the human form, by public authority, this not understanding it, or not receiving it, will just amount to not subscribing it.

"The church," saith the doctor, "hath no "legislative authority."‡ We agree to this likewise. Bishop Hoadly, and, before him,

* Case, p. 44. † Introduct. p. xxiii.
‡ *Apud* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 21.

St. Paul, have proved it beyond the possibility of an answer. But, in this case of subscription, the question is not what power the church hath of right, but what power she exercises. It is very possible for a man to wave or to give up his rights, whether civil or religious, to an usurped authority.

"Every man," saith Dr. Clarke, "that, "for the sake of peace and order, [let me add, "or for a maintenance,] assents to, or makes "use of human forms, is obliged to reconcile "and understand them in such a sense only "as appears to him to be consisent with the "doctrine of scripture; otherwise he parts "with his christianity, for the sake of a civil "and political religion."*

The Doctor means, *obliged in conscience*, and as *a protestant*. But, suppose he cannot reconcile and understand these human forms in such sense only, or even at all, which is not an impossible case; what is he obliged to then?—May not such a man, as the case is here put, be obliged so to understand, reconcile, and assent to Pope Pius's creed, or a chapter in the Koran, upon the same considerations?

But the true case is really this: protestant churches ought not to employ human powers to establish religion upon civil and political principles, nor ought conscientious christians to receive their religion so established. But, if protestant churches, so called, have done this, and approved by deeds what they have

* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 23.

disclaimed in words, they have left the consistent christian no option, but either to comply with those churches upon civil and political principles, or to decline all doctrinal connexion with them.

To what Dr. Clarke says (*Introduct.* p. xvii.) concerning the declarations of the church in the sixth, twentieth, and twenty-first articles, as giving countenance to his scheme of subscription, Dr. Waterland answers, "that these declarations amount to no "more, than that nothing is to be received, "but what is agreeable to scripture. And for "this very reason the church requires sup- "scription in *her own sense*, because she "judges *no other* sense to be agreeable to "scripture."*

This is indeed giving the church but a very indifferent character, representing her as *insinuating one* thing, *and meaning another.* But if it is a true character, who can help it? The church, perhaps, might suppose that the scripture could never be more accurately interpreted, than she had interpreted it in her articles. Be that how it would, her own interpretation of it in these articles is the only one she admits of, exclusive of all other senses. And therefore Dr. Waterland is fairly entitled to his conclusion,—"If any judge that the church's "own sense is not agreeable to scripture, let "them not subscribe."

"When in the public forms," says Dr. Clarke, "there be (as there generally are) "expressions which, at first sight, look differ-

* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 25.

"ent ways, it cannot be but men must be al-
"lowed to interpret what is obscure, by that
"which seems to them more plain and scrip-
"tural."*

Another advocate on the same side expresseth this matter thus: "Unless this liberty be al-
"lowed," i. e. the liberty of subscribing the articles in any sense the words will bear, and in which they may be reconciled to (the subscribers own sense of) scripture, and to the other authorized forms of the church, "no-
"body can subscribe the articles, creeds, and
"liturgy of the church of England at all;
"there are several things in these forms, which,
"if taken in the most obvious sense, contra-
"dict one another."†

No matter for that; if you subscribe them, they must be so taken. For who can give you the liberty you desire? Not the bishops, nor even the legislature, without a new law; and then surely no private man has the power to take this liberty of himself. "No man, says
"*Phileleutherus*, without this liberty can sub-
"scribe our public forms." Without what liberty? Why, the liberty of reconciling contradictions. Did *Phileleutherus* consider to what this liberty may amount? What is there that, with this liberty, a man cannot subscribe? Might not the most crude system of paganism be made good christian divinity, by putting a less obvious sense upon it?

Let us see how Dr. Waterland provides against this inconvenience. "Sometimes,

* Case, p. 26.

† Essay on imposing, &c. by *Phileleutherus Cantabrigiensis*, *p.* 48.

" says he, (in our public forms) the Father is " stiled only God; oftener all three. Some- " times two of the persons are introduced, in a " subordination of order to the first. At other " times, their perfect equality of nature" (which, by the way, excludes all sorts and degrees of subordination, for *subordination of order* is nonsense) " is as fully and clearly pro- " fessed."*

These, I suppose, are the contradictions and obscurities, or some of them, objected by Dr. Clarke and *Phileleutherus*. But Dr. Waterland will have it, that all here is easy and consistent; "because what goes before or after " them, and other passages in our public " forms, REQUIRE that they should be con- " sistent." In consequence of which, Dr. Waterland is for putting a less obvious sense upon those passages which seem, at first sight, to contravene a perfect equality in the godhead.

Would this ridiculous sophistry of Waterland's have gone down with Dr. Clarke and his party? By no means. And yet they proceed upon the same principle, when they would put a less obvious sense upon the passages which affirm a perfect equality; namely, because the plain scriptural doctrine of a subordination of nature REQUIRES this less obvious sense to be put upon those passages, that all may be clear and consistent.

But who sees not that all these several senses are established in our public forms? Who sees not that, in the eye of the law, and in the intention of the church, every subscriber sub-

* Waterland's Case, &c. p. 30, 31.

scribes to them all? And consequently, that in subscribing, Dr. Waterland was an arian, and Dr. Clarke an athanasian, as often as they received these inconsistent forms respectively, by subscribing them?

In one word, all Dr. Clarke's arguments, that I have seen, tend only to prove, that in truth, and reason, and common justice, and common sense, such and such things ought not to have been imposed upon christians in protestant churches; which he and others have done with all possible precision and perspicuity. But not one of them hath been able to shew, that such things are not imposed. Dr. Clarke, indeed, has as good as confessed the fact, in the long passage I have cited from his *Introduction;* and hath more than supposed it, in the suggestions at the end of his book, concerning the expediency of a review of our ecclesiastical forms. For if all these liberties in assenting to and subscribing these forms are given, and may be honestly and conscientiously taken, the occasion for a review, or, in other words, for altering these forms, cannot be so very pressing as he would represent it.

The next advocate for this liberty and latitude in our subscriptions, is the acute writer of *The Case of Subscription*, &c. in answer to Dr. Waterland's *Case of Arian Subscription.** But as this gentleman argues chiefly from Dr. Waterland's concessions, and from that in particular which imports that some of the articles are left indeterminate, there is not much in his pamphlet which has not already fallen un-

* Commonly supposed to be Dr. Sykes.

der our notice. Some things, however, deserve our farther consideration.

The first remarkable occurrence in this performance, is the great stress that is laid upon King Charles I.'s Declaration, which gave the latitudinarian subscribers the first hint of *general, literal,* and *grammatical* senses. It has been proved before, that this rescript is of no manner of validity. But suppose it, for the present, to have the validity of a royal declaration; what would be its operation? Just the same with that of King James II's *Declaration for liberty of Conscience;* which went upon the pretence, that there was a power in the crown to dispense with the statute-law of the land. The doctrinal articles of religion (concerning which we are now enquiring) had, in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. as strong a statute on their side, as any of those which excluded papists from offices of trust or power in the reign of James II. The title of these articles was recognized in the act of the 13th of Elizabeth. And that title set forth, that they were agreed upon *for the preventing diversities of opinions,* and consequently, for the preventing of all *general, literal,* or *grammatical* senses, which admitted diversities of opinions. King Charles's Declaration then, which is understood to have introduced these senses, and thereby to have allowed of diversities of opinions, was just as subversive of the ecclesiastical, as King James's was of the civil constitution. I have indeed said elsewhere, that I do not understand the declaration before the articles in this light. I offer this therefore only as an argument *ad hominem,* which might

have put this ingenious person to some trouble to vindicate his revolution principles, of which he was known to be a strenuous and successful assertor.

What he says from Fuller's Church-History of Britain, is something (and but very little) more considerable. It concerns Rogers's Exposition of the xxxix articles. "Some protestants, according to Fuller, conceived it "presumption for any private minister to "make himself the mouth of the church, to "render her sense in matters of so high con-"cernment. Others were offended, that he "[Rogers] confined the charitable latitude, "formerly allowed in these articles; the com-"posers whereof, providently foreseeing dif-"ferences of opinions, purposely couched the "articles in general terms, &c."*

Now, I would desire to know what there is in this censure extraordinary? or what there is in it that affects Rogers's Exposition, more than the sentiments of particular readers affect any other new book that is published, and particularly any exposition of these articles?

Bishop Burnet, in the History of his own times, gives us an account of the ill reception his Exposition met with among some church-of-England men, and records an attempt to censure it even in the convocation, particularly because of his asserting, that men might subscribe the articles in any literal or grammatical sense the words would bear.

* *Case of Subscription occasioned*, &c. p. 14. See this fancy of Dr. Fuller's effectually overthrown in a pamphlet, intituled, *Remarks on the Rev. Dr. Powell's Sermon in defence of Subscriptions*, p. 46, e. q. f. printed for Millar, 1758.

Would the author of *the case* allow these censures to afford a good argument, that the composers of the articles intended *no* latitude? Or would he allow them, without some farther circumstance of proof, to invalidate *his majesty's declaration*, under the wing of which the bishop asserts this latitude?

If not, what proof can be drawn from Fuller's historical account of a matter of fact, that Rogers was in the wrong, and that the composers of the articles did really intend a latitude?

Probably it will be said, that the censurers of Rogers's book, living nearer the times of the composers than bishop Burnet's opponents, had a better opportunity to know whether they intended a latitnde or not. But to this it would be sufficient to answer, that Rogers himself, living nearer those times than either bishop Burnet, or even Fuller himself, must be better acquainted with the minds of the composers than either of these historians; and full as well as any of his censurers. So that from this kind of presumptive reasoning no satisfaction arises, either on the one side or the other.

If we go farther into particulars, Rogers has greatly the advantage of all that come after him, in point of authority. His book was dedicated to archbishop Bancroft, whose chaplain he was; and bears in the front of it a testimony, that it was perused, and, by the lawful authority of the church of England, allowed to be public.*

* Both they who said in Fuller's days, that Rogers made himself the mouth of the church as a private minister, and they who, in these later times, have denied that the said Rogers had the authority

"That in our articles," says this writer, "a "latitude was designed to be given to, and "therefore may be taken by, the subscriber, is "no new opinion, or of nine or ten years "standing only, is evident."*

That the opinion is not new, is indeed evident from Fuller. But opinion is one thing, and fact is another. That such latitude was really designed, never has been, nor ever can be, proved. It was Dr. Waterland's opinion, with respect to the calvinistical articles. But

he pretends to in his title page, were mistaken. The appointed licensers of books, at that time, were the chaplains of the archbishop of Canterbury, and of the bishop of London, and sometimes of other bishops. Rogers was chaplain to archbishop Bancroft, and as such had (what was then esteemed a lawful) authority to give books their passport to the press. But to have given a formal *imprimatur*, in his own name, to his own book, would have had an odd appearance. He therefore chose to signify the approbation of his book in the manner he has done. And as there can be no doubt but he took Bancroft's sense of the matter for his rule, he certainly had the authority of the church of England for publishing his book; and became the mouth of the church, upon the strength of that authority; and did not make himself the mouth of the church, as a private minister. On the other hand, bishop Burnet, who had the private concurrence and encouragement of archbishop Tennison and several others of the bench, declares, that his Exposition was *not a work of authority*; nor do any of the rest who have written upon the subject pretend to it, except Welchman, and he indeed brings an *Imprimatur* from a deputy Vicechancellor of Oxford, who certainly was not the mouth of the church. This book of Rogers's then is the only authoritative exposition we have of the articles; though Welchman's is the book in vogue for the examination of candidates, and hath passed through no less than ten editions, six latin, and four English, and all with considerable variations from Rogers, particularly in the article of scripture proofs, some of which, in Welchman, are something worse than nothing to the purpose. And as to the other explanations and authorities that Welchman brings, it is remarkable that he is ten times more restrictive, with respect to a particular determinate sense, than Rogers himself.

* Case occasioned, &c. p. 14.

this very author of the *case* hath, in answer to Waterland's supplement, made it sufficiently evident, that the doctor's opinion was groundless. And if so, the doctor might effectually have turned the tables upon him, with respect to the articles concerning the Trinity, in some of which the compilers of 1562 have taken away the little appearance of latitude there was in the articles of King Edward.*

This opinion of a latitude intended to be given to subscribers of the articles is indeed only matter of oral tradition, bred out of the distress of some particular persons, who desired to keep a good conscience, and not to part with a good benefice. One would think, by Fuller's manner of representing the censures upon Rogers, that there had been a cloud of witnesses for this intended latitude. But, when he had occasion to defend his position, he could name only king James, who had no better proof of it than another man; viz. the occasion he had for this hypothesis when he was veering about to the arminians.

Nothing is more evident, in the ecclesiastical histories of those times, than that Queen Elizabeth's bishops either had no notion that latitude and toleration were gospel-privileges, or an utter aversion to such notion, as schismatical and puritanical. Their own hardships under Queen Mary had taught them very little compassion for dissenters, when the rod of correction came into their own hands, though honest Fuller would have had it believed, that it was a consideration of this sort that brought

* See Remarks on Dr. Powell's sermon, p. 51.

forth this *discreet laxity* in wording the articles ; in which there is just as much truth, as there is common sense in his supposing them to have prediscovered the dissensions that would happen in the church an hundred years after they were dead.

But the ingenious author of the *case*, besides bringing these authorities, bethinks himself of pleading for this latitude from the reason of the thing.

" He that composes a form of words, says " he, either so inaccurately, or so designed- " ly, as that the propositions contained in " them, in the usual literal construction, may " or do signify different things, has no reason " to complain of prevarication, if men of very " different notions unite in subscribing such " form."

But the church denies that this is her case. She declares her articles were not *so* composed, either *inaccurately* or *designedly*. The fallacy of this reasoning consists in the casuist's supposing, that the usual literal construction of words is not always the same. When the church set forth these forms of words, the usual literal construction of them was but one. If time, and the mutability of language, have given room for another usual, literal construction of these words or forms, the church cannot help that, because she could not foresee it. They who understand both constructions (as all scholars do) know very well, that the old one is the church's construction ; and therefore they who put the new construction upon the church's old words, or forms,—*they*, I say, and not the compilers of the articles, are

the inaccurate persons, and, as such, are justly complained of for prevaricating. And indeed all the subsequent sophistry of this writer turns upon what he calls, the natural and proper signification of words. Natural and proper, with respect to the signification of such words in modern usage, were, he well knows, though he chooses to dissemble it, unnatural and improper in the year 1562.

Let us now take a view of another sincere friend to religious liberty, who wrote a pamphlet, much esteemed, in the year 1719, under the name of *Phileleutherus Cantabrigiensis*, entituled, *An Essay on imposing and subscribing Articles of Religion.*

This very sensible writer begins with making allowances for an (humanly) established authority in matters ecclesiastical, (and, by the way, makes a great many more allowances than he ought to have made;*) after which he insists, that "no articles, as a rule and standard of "doctrinal preaching, ought to be imposed, "because of the great danger that the right "of christians to private judgment incurs by "such imposition;" notwithstanding which, he is of opinion, that, "for the sake of peace, "a man may submit to an usurpation upon "this right, provided he believes what is con-"tained in the articles."

When he comes to explain what he means by believing what is contained in the articles, it appears to be, "believing them in any sense "the words will admit of." In consequence of which, he takes some pains to shew, that

* See *an Apology for a proteſtant diſſenter*, printed for Burne, 1755. p. 28, 29.

" these articles may be subscribed (and con-
" sequently believed) by a Sabellian, an or-
" thodox Trinitarian (whose opinion he calls
" nonsense,) a Tritheist, and an Arian so
" called."

One would wonder what idea this writer had of *peace*, when he supposed it might be kept by the act of subscription, among men of these different jndgments. Why might not the same men, with equal safety to the peace of the church, subscribe four several forms of words, each expressing his own system clearly and explicitly, as subscribe the same form of words in four different senses?

But did this gentleman, in good earnest, believe, that the compilers of the articles intended to make room for these *four* several senses? I will answer for him—He did not believe it. We all know, by the title of the articles, and he knew it as well as any of us, that the sense of the compilers was but *one* sense; and that sense being bound upon the subscriber by law, it is plain that three of the senses above-mentioned are excluded, both in the intention of the compilers, and by the tenor of the law which establishes the articles, and enjoins subscription to them.

Let us now look back to his principles. Why ought not such articles to be imposed upon christian preachers, as a test? He does not, indeed, answer this question in plain terms; but his principles lead us to a very just and proper answer to it; namely, because the subject of preaching in a christian church, is the gospel of Christ, over which no human power can have any controul, or exercise any, with-

out incurring the guilt of setting up another gospel, under another authority, distinct from HIS, who hath declared himself to be the ONE master to whom all christians ought to submit. Would this gentleman have asserted *totidem verbis*, that we may give up our christian liberty to those who usurp the province of Christ? He makes use, indeed, of the word usurpation, but he refers it only to the right of private judgment; and of this right, or liberty, he makes little doubt but a man may abridge himself, p. 33.

But upon what is this *right* founded? Is it not solely upon those principles of the gospel, that Christ is king in his own kingdom; that he is the only lord and master in matters pertaining to conscience? And can any man give way to an usurpation of that authority which Christ claims solely to himself, without revolting from his allegiance, and submitting to an usurper of his kingdom?

Here let us stop. There is no occasion to proceed a step further, or to enquire upon what notions of latitude in the articles the Essayer could reconcile his subscription to them with his obligations to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free.* Upon which subject he hath indeed brought no more than hath been answered already.

There is yet another writer upon this subject, of the same complexion, who must not be wholly passed by, as he hath been at the pains to sum up the whole merits of this case in a few words.*

* In a pamphlet intituled, *The external Peace of the Church only attainable by a zeal for scripture in its just Latitude*, 1716, printed for Baker.

"If, says he, "we consider ourselves as "members of the church of England, we are "not obliged to an uniformity of opinion."

In other words, the church of England, as such, hath no uniform doctrine; which, whatever the matter of fact may be, the church, I apprehend, will not take for a compliment. But this idle notion being built entirely on *his Majesty's Declaration*, falls to the ground along with that. He goes on:

"If the legislature do not think fit to deter- "mine in what particular sense the subscriber "shall give his assent, it is very possible and "well known, that persons of quite opposite "opinions may and do subscribe."

Hath the legislature then determined, that men may subscribe the articles in opposite senses? No. If not, then, hath the legislature determined any thing about articles and subscriptions? Yes: it hath determined that the articles shall be subscribed, for the purpose of avoiding diversities of opinions. The legislature then hath determined that the articles shall be subscribed only in one sense respectively; and that is, in the most obvious sense of each article.

"The sense," saith this author, "which "such as require subscriptions accept and to- "lerate, is to be the rule of subscription."

This matter is put in a wrong light. It is the law, and the law only, which requireth subscription; and "requireth that it should be "made before the ordinary, that is, in the pre- "sence of the person who institutes. The or- "dinary is not bound to offer the articles to

" be subscribed; but the clerk himself is bound " to offer to subscribe them; and he must sub- " scribe without any reserve, exception, or " qualification."*

The canonical subscription is indeed another affair, of which there is no present occasion to say any thing, as the question here is only concerning subscription as enjoined by the legislature. And enough has been said of this, to refute our author's fancy about accepting and tolerating senses.

The author concludes thus: "since the " church therefore accepts and tolerates con- " trary opinions, 'tis plain the church does not " conceive identity of opinion necessary to " her tranquillity."

The church, as we have seen, *accepts or tolerates* nothing, but what the law allows her to *accept* and *tolerate;* which is just the reverse of *contrary opinions.* The notion indeed is absurd, even so far as there is any colour to apply it to the church. If the church *accepts* and *tolerates*, she likewise *espouses* and *maintains*, contrary opinions. For the persons, whose contrary opinions she *accepts* and *tolerates*, do, by this very act of subscription, become part of the body of the church herself, and most commonly are the very mouth of the church; and retail their contrary opinions to the public, by the very authority which the church gives them. Is not this to lift the church off her ancient foundations? Or, rather is it not to own the justice of that re-

* *Vade Mecum*, p. 79, under *Institution.*

proach, "That the church of England, pro-
"perly so called, is not now existing."*

There were several others of this way of thinking, who bore a part in this controversy; but, as they all went into the church at the same door which Dr. Clarke had opened for them, and believed, or pretended to believe, the protestations of the church, against the matter of fact, we meet with nothing in their respective systems of latitude, which hath not already been obviated. And, the matter of fact being so plain and indisputable, it is to little purpose to argue the point of right, upon the original protestant principle; as if that principle was still allowed to have its uncontrouled operation in the matter of subscription to the articles. We frankly allow that every protestant, as such, has a right to deny his assent to, or approbation of, any doctrine, which he himself conceives to be contrary to the scriptures. But the moment he sits down to

* See a pamphlet intituled, *Observations upon the conduct of the Clergy in relation to the thirty-nine articles.* "These stric-
"tures of religion," says this excellent writer, (meaning the thirty-nine articles) "are either a rule of teaching in this church, or they
"are not a rule. If they are not a rule, what constitutes the church
"of England? If they be a rule and a standard, where must be
"grounded the authority of modern teaching, which is not only not
"agreeable to these articles, but absolutely a contrary system? In
"case, by any after-lights, a clergyman finds cause to change his
"subscribing opinion (a right I shall not dispute,) and goes into dif-
"ferent schemes, why is not such disagreement with his rule pub-
"licly acknowledged, and the people advertised of the difference? "This mystery of the pulpit appears to me unfair with respect to the
"people. They have no fixed sight of their minister's scheme.
"They can have no security, no dependence upon him, in any doc-
"trinal point whatsoever." Page 2, 3.

subscribe the xxxix articles, circumstanced and conditioned as that subscription now is, he sits down to sign away this right (as much as in him lies,) and to transfer it to the church. The church, indeed, does not in so many words require him to subscribe to any thing which is contrary or even disagreeable to the scripture. But the church, by obtaining that subscription from him, takes the interpretation of scripture out of his hands. It is the church, and the church only, that finds therein, and proves thereby, the propositions to be subscribed: and if a man should after that, pretend to interpose his own judgment in contradiction to the church's findings and provings, the church, with the help of the state, would soon shew him his mistake; by virtue of that alliance, the original instrument of which hath been so happily discovered and commented upon by a great genius of our own times. The church of England "tells mankind indeed, they shall "judge for themselves: but if they who take "her word, do not think and judge as she "does, they shall suffer for it, and be turned "out of the house." To prove the EQUITY of which proceeding (EQUITY and UTILITY, in this author's idea, being the same thing) is the laudable purpose of this famous new-found ALLIANCE.

There is yet one writer behind, who hath offered a plea for liberty and latitude in subscribing the articles, of a different complexion from the rest. The writer I mean is Dr. Clayton, the late worthy bishop of Clogher in Ireland, and author of the *Essay on Spirit*, who, in his dedication of that learned work, hath

taken this matter of subscription into particular consideration.

Bishop Conybeare had observed, in his sermon on the *Case of Subscription*, that the xxxix articles are not to be considered as articles of peace, but of doctrine, as the very title denotes, which is, *for avoiding diversities of opinions, and for establishing consent touching true religion.* And from this circumstance his lordship inferred, and very justly, "that every "man's subscription amounts to an approba-"tion of, and an assent to, the truth of the "doctrine therein contained, in the very sense "in which the compilers thereof are supposed "to have understood them."

Now, the right reverend Essayist tells us, his case was this: "Being a clergyman, he had "subscribed the articles pretty early in life, "and probably in the sense in which the com-"pilers understood them. But, finding rea-"sons afterwards to disagree with his former "opinions, he laboured under some difficulties "how to direct himself in these circumstances."

Had bishop Conybeare been consulted upon these difficulties, there is little doubt but he would have answered, that this change of opinion in the Essayist was virtually disclaiming his subscription, which let him into his function; and, as he now no longer complied with the conditions required by the church of all her ministers, an obligation seemed to lay upon him to resign his preferments in the church.

To avoid this consequence, bishop Clayton was inclined to consider these articles, not as articles of doctrine, but as articles of peace. "As I apprehend," says he, "that the church-

" of Ireland does not set up for infallibility, I " do not think she requireth any other kind of " subscription than such as is necessary for " peace-sake."

What the laws of subscription are in Ireland, I know not; but if his lordship formed his judgment only on the circumstance of the church of Ireland's disclaiming infallibility, I fancy the case may be much the same there as in our own country; where, though we are not *infallible*, we are *always in the right*. His apprehensions, therefore, of ecclesiastical moderation, in the one country or the other, will go but a little way towards settling the debatable point between the Essayist and bishop Conybeare, which, resting upon a matter of fact, must be determined by suitable evidence.

" I apprehend," says Dr. Clayton, " any " attempt towards avoiding diversity of opi- " nion, not only to be an useless, but an im- " practicable scheme." In which I entirely agree with him. But what then? It actually was the attempt of our first reformers, and is still the scheme of the churches of England and Ireland.

" I do not only doubt," continues he, " whe- " ther the compilers of the articles, but even " whether any two thinking men, ever agreed " exactly in their opinion, not only with re- " gard to all the articles, but even with regard " to any one of them."

The presumptive proof is very strong, that Cranmer was the sole compiler of king Edward's articles. The alterations and corrections of 1562 are well known to be in Parker's hand, who, though he might make a shew of

consulting his brethren, most probably gave them to understand at the same time, that the articles were to pass as they were then settled.* Thinkers in those days, any more than in our own, were not very common; and perhaps not half a dozen of those to whom they were communicated, or who subscribed them, considered how far they differed from each other, or suspected that they differed at all. They received them implicitly, as hundreds do to this hour; and, consequently, in the sense of the compiler or compilers. They transmitted them to posterity, just as they received them; and just so were they bound upon posterity by law. The inutility, therefore, and the impracticability of an uniformity of opinion, where men are disposed to think for themselves, is indeed an unanswerable argument why such articles should never be imposed, but will afford no proof that our xxxix articles are not imposed with this particular view.

But, though the right reverend author of the Essay thinks thus of our articles, and of the subscribers to them, he seems to think it expedient that there should be some such system of doctrines, not indeed as a test of opinions, but of profession. I say, he seems to think so. But let the reader judge from his own words.

"An uniformity of profession," says he. "may indeed be both practicable and useful;

* The Irish articles were different from those of the church of England, till the year 1634, "when, by the power of the lord de-"puty Wentworth, and the dexterity of bishop Bramhal, the Irish "articles were repealed in a full convocation, and those of England "authorized in the place thereof." Heylin's History of the presbyterians, p. 395.

" and seems, in some degree, to be necessary, " not only for the preservation of peace, but " also for the general good and welfare of so- " ciety."

His lordship must mean, an uniformity of profession with respect to those things, concerning which the belief or persuasion of the several professors may be different and multiform. Otherwise the proposition is not of sufficient importance to require, or indeed to deserve, a formal argument to support it. For who ever doubted but that, in matters of religion, a man both usefully may and reasonably ought to profess what he believes?

By religion, I mean the christian religion. But to believe one thing, and to profess another, the christian religion calls hypocrisy, and under that name severely censures and condemns it. Hypocrisy, indeed, may serve the turn of a particular class of men in society, who have views and interests distinct from the general good and welfare of the whole. But how this grand enemy to truth and virtue should contribute either to the peace of, or be otherwise useful or wholesome to, society in general, is a mystery that will require some elucidation.

"I do not conceive," says this ingenious prelate, "how any society or commonwealth " can subsist, unless some form of religion or " other be established therein, as well with re- " gard to doctrine as discipline; which [points " of doctrine] however ought to be as plain, " few, and fundamental, as possible."

Forms of discipline are not, indeed, now at issue; but are however necessary to be taken

into the account. And as St. Paul thought, that men might *lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty*, under proper subjection to, and coercion of, the civil magistrate, I do not see that I should be ashamed to think so too. And this point being settled, how the subsistence of any society or republic should depend upon the establishment of doctrinal forms of religion, is just as difficult for me to conceive, as it was to the learned prelate to conceive the contrary.*

That his lordship meant some human form of religion, is evident from his adding, that *the points of doctrine in such form should be as plain, few, and fundamental, as possible.* But, for my part, I cannot see why establishing the scriptures should not answer all the ends of civil society, in this respect, as well as any other forms. When you have made a proper provision for the external deportment of men, as subjects to the state, by a wholesome and righteous civil institute, it remains only that their religious manners, sentiments, and dispositions, should be formed by the rules, precepts, and doctrines, of the word of God. But this,

* "With regard to the safety of the government from persons "disapproving the communion of the church, that point the prince "only has to do with, and the legislature. In case a test can be "found, of a secular kind, adequate to that purpose, as certainly "there may, to draw religious controversies into the question, is al-"together foreign. This latter makes the safety proposed by it (if "I am not mistaken) not so properly the safety of the prince or mo-"narchy [one may add likewise, of the state,] as the safety of the "clergy and hierarchy, in their authority and acquisitions. Other-"wise the oath of supremacy and allegiance would be sufficient. It "is the only test the occasion naturally calls for." *Seagrave's observations on the conduct of the clergy in relation to the thirty-nine articles*, p. 45, 46.

being a matter rather of personal than of public concern, must be left to the men themselves, if we would have the work done with its proper influence and effect. Whatever appearances of sanctity, devotion, and christian virtue, external forms and ordinances may produce in public, it is but so much hypocrisy, if a real principle of religion is not in the hearts of the several individuals; and how this principle should be planted in the heart, rather by human forms, than by the genuine scriptures, no mortal can tell. From what I have seen of human forms, I will venture to say, that points of christian doctrine cannot be made plainer in them, than they are already in the scriptures; and fewer or less fundamental they ought not to be made.

But, to come a little nearer the point in hand: the bishop doubts, as we have seen, "whether "any two thinking men ever agreed exactly in "opinion with regard to any one of our xxxix "articles." And he who doubts this, can hardly suppose that any form of doctrine can be drawn up in human language, consisting of points so plain, few, and fundamental, as that all, or even a majority, of those for whose use they are intended, shall perfectly agree in them. The bishop will say, there is no occasion they should, because uniformity of profession is all that he wants to have established. But, if so, why will not our present articles, why indeed will not the articles of Trent, do as well as any other for the purpose? He that professes to believe points of doctrine which he does not believe, be they ever so plain, few, or fundamental, in the apprehension of the establishers,

is just as much an hypocrite, as if such forms were stuffed with ever so many impertinences, or even falsities.

The use of religion to society, I apprehend to be, that men, having in their hearts the fear of God, and of his judgments, may be restrained from evil, and encouraged to be virtuous, in such instances as are beyond the reach of human laws. Points of doctrine, therefore, established for the public good of society, must have this use of religion for their object. But if a man disbelieves in his heart, what he professes with his tongue or with his pen, religion, as such, has no hold of him in that instance; and society has no more benefit from his profession, than if such points of doctrine had not been established.

Again. To make uniformity of religious profession necessary, in any degree, for the subsistence of the commonwealth, it must be necessary that the points to be professed be established upon exclusive conditions: and this extending, in our author's plan, both to doctrine and discipline, will leave no room for dissenters in either. For every dissenter breaks in upon the scheme of uniformity, and consequently on the peace and welfare which this uniformity is intended to maintain. This, at once, demolishes all those systems of government, which tolerate doctrines and disciplines contrary to the established forms. Whereas experience has taught us, that those commonwealths have always been either the freest from religious feuds, or the least incommoded by them, which have tolerated different sects with

the greatest latitude, and appropriated the fewest emoluments to one.

If the question should be asked, why a commonwealth, or a state, cannot subsist in peace and welfare without some established form of religion, the answer to be expected from his lordship would be, that except men were uniform in their profession of religion, there could be nothing in a state but discord and confusion. And yet his lordship says, "if men were not "to speak their minds in spite of establish-"ments (that is to say, openly profess things "contrary to establishments) truth would soon "be banished from the earth."

Does not this plainly imply, that establishments banish truth from the earth, in the same proportion as they answer the ends of peace and welfare to the civil community? Or, how could worse evils result from mens speaking their minds, when they were under no restraints from establishments, than now, when they take that liberty in spite of them?

The defender of the *Essay on spirit* is displeased with somebody for suggesting that his client ought to have been against all religious establishments; which however is true enough, if these above-mentioned are the effects of them. True religion never can subsist, whatever may become of civil communities, upon the basis of hypocrisy; or, where men are obliged to profess one thing, and allowed to believe another. And if the rule of true religion be taken from the christian scriptures, the temporal peace and safety of any christian, in civil society, is but a secondary consideration, to the obligation he is under to hold fast his integrity, in truth and sincerity.

The reason given, why human establishments with regard to religion are necessary, is, "that "the welfare and support of society is so founded, by the great author of nature, on the "basis of religion, that it is impossible to separate the one from the other; and, of consequence, the establishment of the one will "necessarily require the establishment of the "other."*

The meaning of which, at the bottom, is only this: that human laws reach the exigencies of civil society so imperfectly, that, unless the influence of religion is connected with them, the welfare and peace of civil society cannot be supported: which, I apprehend, nobody will deny.

But then, as this plan of civil government is delineated by the great *author of nature*, it will be necessary to take *his* directions in the execution of it, if any such directions may be come at: and if no such directions are to be found, it is doubtful, whether the plan itself, authorised by the great *author of nature*, may be found.

The sophism here turns upon the word establishment. Religion may be said to be established, when it is received and professed by individuals, upon the sole authority of divine revelation. Civil society can only be established by human laws and ordinances, at least as this author conceives, and as, for the present, I am willing to grant. If then the establishment of religion by divine revelation is sufficient to answer the purposes of civil soci-

* Defence of the *Essay on Spirit*, p. 2.

ety, the purposes of the great *author of nature*, in creating this connection, are answered at the same time ; and with any farther establishment of religion, human laws have nothing to do. Whether they have or not, is the question. And hereupon, the writer of the *letter to the bishop of Clogher* very pertinently asks, *who* is the judge? that is to say, who is the judge, how far it may be necessary to establish religion by human laws?

To this the defender answers, without hesitation, "the same legislative powers, which "establish the one, have a right to establish "the other; and to chuse that religion which "they think to be best."*

Where it must be supposed, that the *great author of nature* hath left it as free for magistrates, and legislators, to establish by human laws what doctrines or modes of religion they chuse, or find expedient for secular utility, as it is for them to chuse what modes of civil society they find convenient. Which indeed is to suppose, that there never was any authentic revelation of true religion in the world. For as surely as God hath revealed true religion, so surely has he inhibited magistrates, and all others, from establishing any thing contrary to it, or deviating from it.

But by what is said in the dedication prefixed to the *Essay on spirit*, the defender, most likely, would confine this right of the legislative powers, to the inforcing of an uniformity of profession only.

But it has been shewn above, that in this

* Defence of the *Essay on Spirit*, p. 2.

view, the establishment of religion will afford no aid to civil laws; inasmuch as he who professes one thing, and believes another, will derive none of that influence from his profession, which is necessary to supply the unavoidable defects of civil ordinances. And, if the *great author of nature* founded the welfare and support of society on no surer basis of religion than this, it hardly seems worthy of his infinite wisdom to have interposed in this matter at all.

Upon the principles of this author, whatever right christian legislators have to establish what religion they chuse for the best, the same had the pagan legislators.* Suppose then these lat-

* The author of the *Essay on Establishments*, &c. having asserted this right to Pagan legislators in its full extent, and without reserve, it may not be unentertaining at least to take a view of *the sort of right* which may be supposed to result from the sentiments of one of the wisest among them; premising, that even Pagan legislators in general seem to have been sensible, that a right to establish religion upon the foot of civil authority only, was too precarious to be depended upon, without the sanction of a divine revelation, which, therefore, they took care to forge for the purpose. I can hardly think the *Essayist on Establishments* (politician as he is) will say, that the Pagan legislators had a right to forge these revelations. And yet this he must say, if he will vindicate to the Pagan legislators an unlimited right of establishing what religion they pleased; as it might be, in some cases at least, impossible for them to establish any popular or national religion without such forged revelation. Let us pitch upon Cicero for our guide in this disquisition, and try what information we can gain from his speculations upon this interesting subject. According to Dr. Middleton, "Cicero never harboured a "thought of the truth or divinity of so absurd a worship, as that of "the religion of his country; and yet always recommended it as a "wise institution, contrived for the uses of government, and to keep "the people in order, singularly adapted to the genius of Rome; and "constantly inculcates an adherence to its rights, as the duty of all "good citizens." Life of Cicero, vol. iii. octavo, p. 345. One

ter to have extended their establishment no far-

of the citations the ingenious biographer brings to verify this representation, is taken from the last section of Tully's second book on Divination; where in the context we find, to our great surprize, the Roman patriot turning downright *Confessionalist*, exploding one sort of divination after another, lamenting, that "superstition had spread "every where, oppressed the minds of almost all, and had seized "upon human weakness in general; that it had been his view, both "in these books on *divination*, and in those on the *nature of the* "*gods*, to set this forth; and that he should esteem it a considerable "service done to himself and his friends, if he could root up this "superstition effectually." He then goes on, in the true stile of a reformer, to say, that "religion should not be taken away along with su-"perstition, nor did he mean it." *Nam et majorum instituta tueri sacris cæremoniisque retinendis sapientis est* (which is the *whole* of Dr. *Middleton's* citation from this section;) upon this principle, *esse præstantem aliquam æternamque naturam et eam suspiciendam admirandamque hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi, ordoque rerum cælestium cogit confiteri.* And he concludes thus: *Quamobrem, ut religio propaganda etiam est,* QUÆ EST JUNCTA CUM COGNITIONE NATURÆ, *sic superstitionis stirpes omnes ejiciendæ: instat enim et urget, et quo te cumque verteris persequitur; sive tu vatem, sive tu omen audieris; sive immolaris, sive avem aspexeris,* &c. &c. But how shall we separate the effects of superstition here enumerated, from the *instituta majorum*, which were undoubtedly the cause of it? If at the root of these superstitious terrors we find the *instituta majorum*, they must go along with the stock, or no remedy is to be had for the evil we would totally eradicate; and undoubtedly there we shall find them. *Apud antiquos*, says VALERIUS MAXIMUS, *non solum publice, sed etiam privatim, nihil gerebatur, nisi auspicio prius sumpto. II.* 1. It is true, in Cicero's time public authority was interposed. Private persons, as it should seem, were not left to interpret omens and prodigies for themselves. *Quæ Augur injusta, nefasta, vitiosa, dira defixerit, irrita, infestaque* [f. *infestaque*] *sunto.*——*Prodigia, portenta, ad Etruscos et Haruspices,* si Senatus jusserit, *deferunto.* De Legibus, II. 8. 9. But would this interposition of public authority prevent the generality from applying omens taken from casualities falling within their notice, to their own private affairs? We see from the instances above enumerated, that it would not. And would it not rather authorize and encourage the private superstition of particular persons? Let the *Augurs*, *Haruspices*, and *Etrusci*, keep their rules of judging as secret as you will, the omen or the prodigy would be

ther than to an uniformity of profession, what

visible, and the interpretation of it, with whatever grimace or solemnity it was given, must be known to the consulter, and would serve him for a precedent, whenever the like should occur to him, upon the most ordinary occasion. The result is, that to eradicate superstition effectually, that religion only must be cultivated and propagated, *quæ juncta est cum cognitione naturæ*. Of this religion Cicero gives a noble description elsewhere, [*De Legibus*, I. 23.] and concludes, that the man who understood it, and practised accordingly, "would despise the precepts of the Pythian Apollo, and "would esteem those things as nothing which were held by the po-"pulace as most considerable." And yet, it is certain, that these precepts of the Pythian Apollo were among the *instituta majorum*, which, according to Dr. Middleton, the Roman patriot would have every good citizen bound in duty to maintain, though nothing more clear than that they were the implements of that very superstition which Cicero wanted to extirpate, and which prevented mankind from arriving at that pitch of wisdom, piety, and public virtue, that proceeded from the knowledge of nature, and of the true religion thence resulting. Bearing in mind these doctrines of Cicero concerning religion, let us next take a short survey of his principles of legislation, of which this is his capital maxim;—*Nos ad justitiam esse natos, neque* opinione, *sed* naturâ *constitutum esse*, Jus. [*De Legibus*, I. 10.] Afterwards he says, *Stultissimum existimare omnia justa esse quæ scita sint in populorum institutis aut legibus;* and he instances in an old law made by the Roman *Interrex*, importing, that the dictator might put to death any citizen he pleased, without a trial; observing, that neither if a whole people should be satisfied with tyrannical laws, would their approbation make them just. Upon Cicero's principles, then, no legislator could have a right to enact such laws as this; that is to say, laws encroaching on the public welfare, or the natural rights of mankind. For if the approbation of a mistaken people, who were to be governed by them, could not give the legislator a right to enact them, he could have no right from any other consideration, namely, from his own opinion, or from political purposes, which had no respect to the welfare of the public. And if this limitation upon the right of legislators was necessary in civil ordinances, I would desire to know what it was that took off the restraint with respect to the establishment of religion; and whence the legislator should have a right to enact such laws as tended *to enslave the mind of man*, and *took the advantage of human weakness, to subject it to the most abject superstition?* One of the ancient laws

were St. Paul's converts to do? were they to

relating to religion recited by Tully [De Legibus, II. 8.] is this: *Separatim nemo habeſſit Deos, neve novos: ſed ne advenas, niſi publice adſcitos, privatim colunto.* Suppoſe a private citizen, full of the ſublime idea of natural religion given by Cicero as abovementioned, ſhould adopt for his private worſhip an object ſuitable to that idea: and ſuppoſe farther, that the circumſtances of his private worſhip ſtrongly marked his contempt for the precepts of the Pythian Apollo; he would, by this intolerant law, be liable to puniſhment. Upon what principle of juſtice could Cicero aſſert to the magiſtrate a right to inflict ſuch puniſhment? Even that flagitious principle, which Middleton ſeems to aſcribe to him, namely, that, *public utility ſhould take place of truth*, would not enable him to vindicate the magiſtrate in this caſe. For the reaſons he gives for extirpating ſuperſtition, and the noble effects of that religion, *quæ juncta eſt cum cognitione naturæ*, enumerated by him, are ſuch as ſhew, even to demonſtration, that public utility would be promoted more out of all proportion, upon his plan of natural religion, than by that of the eſtabliſhed ſyſtem. The impoſſibility indeed of reforming the public religion *infæce Romuli*, might ſtrike him with the ſtrongeſt impreſſions, and occaſion the declaration, *retinere, et tueri, ſapientis eſt* (the *part of a wiſe man, or a politician;* not as Dr. Middleton gives it—the *bounden duty of a good citizen*) but all the ſophiſtry upon earth can never, upon Cicero's principles, derive upon the pagan magiſtrate a right to eſtabliſh what religion he pleaſes. The maxim indeed, that *public utility ſhould take place of truth* (whether Cicero eſpouſed it or not,) is neither better nor worſe than that of the mountebank, *ſi populus decipi vult decipiatur.* And yet, furniſhed with the upper garment of church-authority, thrown over the party-coloured jerkin of the politician, we have ſeen it make its way from the ſchools of paganiſm to a cordial reception in *chriſtian* ſchemes of *alliance*, *chriſtian Eſſays on eſtabliſhments*, and other curioſities deſcriptive of the taſte and temper of the times, which often make impreſſions upon aſpiring geniuſes, that as effectually hinder them from perceiving the impoſture, even with the contents of the chriſtian revelation before them, as the *inſtituta majorum* prevented the Roman augurs from comprehending the benefits of adopting Cicero's benevolent expedients of eradicating the popular ſuperſtition. This once upon a time happened to be the unhappy caſe of our renowned TILLOTSON, as appears by ſome paſſages in a ſermon by him preached before king Charles II. a curious and full account of which may be ſeen in the life of this great man, written by the late Dr. Birch, ed. 8vo. 1752, from p. 61, to p. 70. The

comply with the modes of the times, and pro-

archbiſhop's notion is, that "a magiſtrate may exerciſe the ſame "power over his ſubjects in matters of religion, which every maſter "of a family challengeth to himſelf in his own family; that is, *to* "*eſtabliſh the true worſhip of God, in ſuch manner, and with ſuch* "*circumſtances, as he thinks beſt*, and to permit none to affront it, "or to ſeduce from it thoſe that are under his care." But how ſhall thoſe under the care of the magiſtrate, know whether what is eſtabliſhed, be *the true worſhip of* GOD or not? how if they who *affront* the eſtabliſhed worſhip, or endeavour to *ſeduce* others from it, do it upon a perſuaſion, that the eſtabliſhed worſhip is *not the true worſhip of* GOD? who ſhall be the judge? for that a judge will here be wanted, is plain from what follows: "I do not," ſays the good man, "hereby aſcribe any thing to the magiſtrate that can poſ-"ſibly give him any pretence of right to reject God's true religion, "or to declare what he pleaſes to be ſo, and what books he pleaſes to "be canonical and the word of God, and conſequently to make a "falſe religion ſo current by the ſtamp of his authority, as to oblige "his ſubjects to the profeſſion of it." Now if the magiſtrate, on the one hand, declares for the ſyſtem that pleaſes him beſt, and the ſeducers declare againſt it, the one, on the pretence that it is, the other, that it is not, ſupported by the word of God; and if the magiſtrate has no pretence of right to eſtabliſh his ſyſtem, merely becauſe it pleaſes him, there muſt either lie an appeal to ſome third authority, or the diſpute muſt be endleſs. To ſay, as the preacher does, that "he "who acknowledgeth himſelf to derive all his authority from God, "can pretend to none againſt him," is to put an impoſſible caſe. The acknowledgement, and the pretence, can never be found toge-ther, except in the brain of a lunatic. This, I apprehend, the wor-thy preacher perceived; and therefore, not finding it would anſwer his analogical inſtance, drawn from the authority of the maſter of a family, to confine the authority of the magiſtrate to the eſtabliſh-ment of true religion only, he goes on thus: "But if a falſe religion "be eſtabliſhed by law, the caſe here is the ſame as in all other "laws that are ſinful in the matter of them, but yet made by "a lawful authority." By the way, a lawful authority to make laws which are ſinful in the matter of them, is no very comprehenſible idea. But we muſt take things as they happen to fall out. The law, we will ſuppoſe, is made, and by lawful authority; what is the ſcrupu-lous ſubject to do? The anſwer is, "In this caſe the ſubject is not "bound to profeſs a falſe religion, but patiently to ſuffer for the "conſtant profeſſion of the true." That is to ſay, the ſubject is not bound to obey lawful authority. For the falſe religion is, by

fess themselves idolators? This the apostle

the state of the case, established by lawful authority; and constantly to profess the true religion in opposition to it, is as great an affront to the established religion, as can well be imagined. And this the magistrate must not permit; and the reason the preacher afterwards gives, is, that "no pretence of conscience will warrant any man that "is not extraordinarily commissioned, as the Apostles and first pub- "lishers of the gospel were, and cannot justify that commission by "miracles as they did, to affront the established religion of a nation "*(though it be false)*, and openly draw men off from the profes- "sion of it, in contempt of the magistrate and the law." By this time, all notion of a difference between establishing a true and a false religion is totally vanished. The authority of the magistrate, in either case, is lawful authority; and after all the salvos you can devise, the constant profession of a religion, contrary to the religion established, as well as an endeavour to draw men off from the profession of it, are equally affronts to the religion established, and equally imply a contempt of the magistrate and the law.—No sooner was this sermon in print, than Tillotson was awakened from this dream of the power of the magistrate in matters of religion, by various noises from different quarters. The high ecclesiastics clamoured loudly against this abasement of church authority. The dissenters complained, that, by the doctrine of this sermon, their enemies of the establishment were let loose upon them with a vengeance, and that all they and their forefathers had suffered for conscience sake, was now justified, as the infliction of lawful authority. Others, who on the one hand, were less concerned for the exorbitant claims of the church, and, on the other, only felt the cruel oppression of the protestant dissenters by a charitable sympathy, considered Tillotson's doctrine as injurious to the first protestant reformers, and a disparagement even to the christian religion, which, being sufficiently confirmed and authenticated by the miracles of Christ and his Apostles, would justify the preachers of it in all succeeding times, in their endeavours to propagate it, maugre the powers of this world, without exhibiting the miraculous gifts of the primitive times. It is said, that some remonstrances to this effect, made to Tillotson himself, by his friend Mr. John Howe, brought the preacher to tears of repentance, and to a confession that *what he had offered upon the subject was not to be maintained.* See Dr. Birch, u. s. p. 66. and Calamy's Life of Howe, p. 77. I own, I am a little doubtful of the truth of this account; not only because Calamy had this story only at second hand, but because, according to Dr. Birch, p. 70. the same remonstrances from another hand did not seem to Tillotson

prohibits in express terms; and herein ventures

to be very considerable; and all the sorrow he expressed on this occasion, in a letter to Mr. Nelson, was, that *any thing of his should occasion so much talk and noise.* However, from some motive or other, Tillotson thought fit to add, in the later editions, a healing paragraph, to this effect: "Not but that every man hath a right "to publish and propagate the true religion, and to declare it against "a false one. But there is no obligation upon any man to attempt "this to no purpose; and when, without a miracle, it can have no "other effect but the loss of his own life, unless he have an immedi-"ate command from God to this purpose, and be endued with a "power of [working] miracles, as a public seal and testimony of "that commission, which was the case of the Apostles, &c." This is truly piteous. If every man hath the right here specified, he is sufficiently warranted (whether upon pretence of conscience, or from other considerations) openly to draw men off from the profession of a false religion. The apprehension of "affronting the established religion, "in contempt of the magistrate and the law," can lay no restraint upon him in this respect. They are but bugbear-words, contrived for the convenience of those whose interest it is to perpetuate error. If a man hath "a right to propagate the true religion, and to declare it against "a false one," the natural consequence of his exercising that right will be, the drawing men off from the profession of false religion. Preclude him from exercising his right, and you effectually take away the right itself; with which indeed the magistrate and the laws establishing a false religion can have no authority to interfere, as the professor of the true religion derives his right to propagate and declare it against the false religion, from quite another source. To shift the question, as Tillotson here does, from the right to the obligation, is hardly ingenuous. The question before him, was, not what a man was obliged to do, but what he was warranted to do; and to fall on canvassing the obligation on the foot of prudence and personal safety, immediately after he had allowed the right in its fullest extent, was leading his readers off to a very different consideration, namely, to the mere power of the magistrate, as distinguished from his right. For no magistrate can have the right to take away any man's life for doing what the man has a right to do, independent of the magistrate. Tillotson, therefore, to be consistent with himself, should have cancelled the foregoing paragraph, and have fairly owned, that he was at length better informed; that he had found that the professor of the true religion had a right superior to the authority the magistrate had to establish a false religion; and that what he offered in the foregoing part of his sermon, *could not be maintained.*

to counteract this right of the civil legislative powers. And no doubt upon good authority.

When we apply this theory of religious establishments to our own circumstances, the case will stand thus. Our legislative powers have a right to establish human forms of religion, so far at least as to require uniformity of profession. This right they have exercised, and this right they have from the *great author of nature.* The consequence is, that all dissenters from these established forms, that is, all who disclaim the profession, as well as the belief of them, are not only offenders against civil peace and order, but wicked opposers of the authority of God himself. This indeed has been charged upon them by our zealous church-memorialists with all freedom. The civil powers have however granted them a toleration; which we may be sure they would not have done, unless they had entertained more qualified sentiments concerning their own rights, as well as more accurate conceptions of the welfare and support of society, than this defender of the *Essay on Spirit* exhibits.

But to conclude this chapter. There is one particular weakness and want of forecast, common to all these pleaders for latitude. If you take their several schemes, as they are founded upon the church's declarations, nothing can be more righteous or reasonable than to comply with the terms prescribed by the church; and then, *perfectly consistent is the reasonableness of conformity, with the rights of private judgment.* But go back to their principles of christian liberty, on which they oppose the advocates for church-authority; and you will

find there is nothing more inconsistent with those principles, than the authority which the church of England actually claims and exercises.

The high churchmen, Rogers, Stebbing, Hare, Waterland, Potter, Snape, and their retainers, claim no privileges for the church of England, which she does not actually enjoy; nor any powers which she does not actually exercise. Their proofs are accordingly directed to shew, that she rightly enjoys and exercises these privileges and powers.

When therefore their opponents had shewn, that the church had no such privileges or powers of right; consistency required that they should have withdrawn from a church which usurped an authority that did not belong to her, and to have borne their testimony against her in deeds, as well as words.

CHAP. VII.

An attempt to discover whence the practice of subscribing the xxxix *Articles in different senses was derived; and by what sort of casuists, and what sort of reasoning, it was first propagated, and has been since espoused.*

IT is a fact in which our historical writers of all parties agree, that, during the reign of queen Elizabeth, and for some part of the reign of king James I. there was no difference between the episcopal churchmen and the puritans, in matters of doctrine. The contests between the bishops and the puritans of those times concerning subscription, arose from those articles which asserted the powers of an episcopal hierarchy, and an authority to prescribe and enjoin rites and ceremonies. To these forms of church-government the puritans had, as they thought, unanswerable objections; and therefore would never subscribe those articles, which approved them, without exceptions and limitations.

The parliament of 1572 seems to have thought these objections of the puritans reasonable; and accordingly, in the act of that year, enjoining subscription, those articles are required to be subscribed, which *only concern the confession of the true faith, and the sacraments.* And when archbishop Parker took upon him to expostulate with some members of the house of Commons, for leaving out the rest, he was answered, "that they were not satisfied con-

" cerning their agreement with the word of " God"*

The bishops, however, who were the persons appointed by law to take the security of subscription from the candidates for the ministry, artfully found the means of evading this moderation of the parliament, by making certain canons, in consequence of which, subscription was exacted to all the articles without exception. These canons are to be found in Sparrow's collection, under the title of *liber quorundam canonum, anno* 1571 †

The queen, it seems, (for what reason does not appear) could not be prevailed with to ratify these canons in form; and they were framed likewise, and made public, without the royal license, requisite in such cases. They had, hower, her majesty's verbal approbation, or rather perhaps her connivance; with which, by the way, Grindal, then archbishop of York, was by no means satisfied, and, very probably, never ventured to carry them into execution within his own diocese.‡

* Strype's Life of Parker, p. 394. See alſo Selden's Table talk.

† That is, according to the eccleſiaſtical computation; but they were not publiſhed till after the act was paſſed. In the firſt of theſe canons, ſubſcription is injoined in theſe words, *ita tamen ut ſubſcribant articulis Chriſtianæ religionis, publice in ſynodo approbatis, ſidemque dent, ſe velle tueri et defendere* DOCTRINAM EAM, QUÆ IN ILLIS CONTINETUR, *ut conſentientiſſimam veritati verbi divini;* which ſeems to be much the ſame with the ſubſcription injoined by the act. But, under the title *Concionatores*, the Candidate is to confirm, by his ſubſcription, *the Book of Common Prayer*, and *the Book of Ordination*, &c. And upon this injunction were modelled four articles, called in thoſe days, *The Biſhop's Articles*, the three firſt of which were much the ſame with thoſe in our 36th canon.

‡ See Strype's Life of Parker, p. 322.

The puritans opposed this subscription with all their might. None of them, that I can find, refused to subscribe according to act of parliament; that is to say, to subscribe the doctrinal and sacramental articles.* They, among them, who subscribed them all, never

* "Let us come to the thing itself. Lo, *it is a lawful depriving of ministers for not subscribing.* A lawful! how that? The common law expresseth a subscription to the doctrine of the church of England. This is not refused. But the archbishop [Whitgift] further requireth a subscription *ex officio*. A dangerous thing. Is it not limited? Yes; it must be without prejudice to her majesty's prerogative, by the law of the realm. It must be from her majesty's authority, and not from their own; confirmed by the laws of the land, and not against them; without disquieting the peace of the churches, even by the canon-law itself; the greatest part whereof being antichristian, and justling with her crown, ought to have no force amongst us. It standeth not with her majesty's prerogative, that any subject should take away the livings of her ministers that are in the number of her painfullest and best subjects, at his own pleasure, like a pope, without express law. Wherefore it agreeth not with the law of the realm, and that may appear of sundry well learned in the laws, whose opinions in this case have been shewed and declared." *Part of a Register contayninge sundrie memorable matters*, p. 284. The tract from which this is taken, is called, *The unlawful Practices of Prelates against Godly Ministers, the maintainers of the discipline of God*, mentioned by Strype [Life of Whitgift, p. 121, 122.], who gives some extracts from it, but not any thing touching the illegality of the subscription required. However, the extracts in Strype do no discredit to the author of the tract, who states the case between the archbishop and the non-subscribers, truly and fairly, upon notorious and undeniable facts. Among other things to our present purpose (too long to be transcribed) he speaks of the artifice used by the bishops of those times, to draw in scrupulous men to subscribe, "by the example of others, whom they greatly esteemed, who had subscribed already;" namely, "shewing only the subscriptions in one paper, and retaining the protestation in another," which, as he had said above, "made their subscriptions no subscriptions at all;" by which infamous trick, "many were drawn also, as unwary birds, into the net, by the chirping of the birds, first taken." *Ibid.* p. 297.

omitted to make some exception, or protestation, with respect to the articles which concerned church government or discipline. Where this was not allowed, they refused to subscribe at all, and chose rather to undergo what the bishops thought fit to inflict upon them. I say thought fit; for, certain it is, that the said bishops had then no legal authority to silence, imprison, or deprive, as they did, great numbers of those who refused to subscribe their articles.

These facts are sufficiently proved by Mr. Pierce, in his *Vindication of the Dissenters*. For the present, however, I chuse to appeal to a testimony less exceptionable to churchmen, I mean Thomas Rogers, in the dedication of his exposition of the xxxix articles to archbishop Bancroft, published 1607. Where, though he extols the bishops, and reviles the puritans, with the most abject sycophantry, he hath nevertheless represented the matter so as to shew, with sufficient perspicuity, that the puritans might, with great truth and propriety, have said to Elizabeth, what the Hebrew officers pleaded to Pharaoh, Exod. v. 16. *Behold thy servants are beaten, but the fault is in thine own people.*

Upon the accession of James, things went on pretty much in the same way, till after the Hampton-court-conference, and the publication of the canons of 1604; when, as we are informed by Rogers, certain of the brethren, meaning the puritans, refused to subscribe, not only to the hierarchical articles, but to the rest likewise, " because the purpose or intention of the church, if not her doctrine, were

" somewhat varied [from what they were in " the time of queen Elizabeth ;] in proof of " which they alledged the late book of canons, " the book of conference (meaning bishop " Barlow's account of the conference at Hamp- " ton-court,) and some speeches of men in " great place, and others."*

I do not remember to have seen any mention made of this scruple of the puritans, in any other history or account of those times ; and as it is the first instance of their openly refusing to subscribe the doctrinal articles of the church, it may be worth the while to look a little farther into it, and to find out, if we can, the nature and cause of this new scruple.†

* See Rogers's, Dedication, sect. 34, 35.

† I have lately seen a small pamphlet of six pages, bound up with that copy of *Part of a Register*, &c. which I use, written, as it is said, about the year 1583, and intituled, *A briefe aunswere to the principall pointes in the Archbishop's Articles. Also certayne reasons against subscription to the book of common prayers, and book of articles, as followeth.* In this little piece there is this objection to the 16th article : " They affirm, that a man, after he " hath receyved the Holy Ghost, may fall from grace, contrarie " unto the certayntie of God his election." There is likewise an objection to the 35th article, concerning the homily on the nativity, as containing a double error. But that is a mere cavil, unworthy of farther notice. With respect to the 16th article, as we have no account of this objection from those who were called before the bishops for refusing to subscribe, we may be sure they thought the doctrine of the final perseverance of the elect, sufficiently secured in the article, by its leaving room for arising again by the grace of God ; and we may conclude that this was only the scruple of a private man, not sufficiently versed in the theology of those times, which made a considerable difference between a departing from grace (which is the expression in the article) and the falling from grace (as the objector represents it) ; the one admitting a possibility of arising again, or returning, the other not. The variation of the doctrine of the church, complained of in king James's time, was a different thing, and meant, the putting a new sense upon the words of the article ;

Rogers wisely says nothing to the particulars of this objection; that is, nothing of the canons, or the passages in the *book of conference*, which had given offence. He was writing a fulsome dedication to Bancroft, the father of all this new mischief. To have entered into the merits of the complaint, might have disturbed his patron. We are obliged to him indeed, that he would mention this matter at all; and cannot but do him the justice to acknowledge, that he hath acquitted himself of the difficulty upon his hands by a very dextrous quibble, viz. "That the words of the articles being "still the same, the doctrine, purpose, "and intention of the church must be the "same likewise." And if the puritans would not be imposed on by this sophism, it was none of his fault.

But to come to the point. The regal supremacy, as extended to ecclesiastical matters, and especially in the hands of a woman, was an eye-sore from the beginning to the puritans, as well as to the papists. This obliged Parker, in reviewing Edward's articles in 1562, to add a pretty long explanation, to the article concerning the civil magistrate, importing, "that the "ministering either of God's word, or of the "sacraments, were not given to our prince,— "but only that prerogative which we see to "have been given always, to all godly prin- "ces in the holy scriptures, by God him- "self;" meaning the godly princes of Judah and Israel. Art. 37.

and it was probably from an apprehenſion of the evil tendency of that practice, that Dr. Reynolds propoſed, at the Hampton-court conference, to add the reſtrictive words, *not totally, or finally*, to this article, that it might not ſeem to croſs the doctrine of predeſtination.

With this explanation the puritans had reason to be (and probably were) satisfied. When the kings of Israel and Judah interfered with the sacred office of the priesthood, farther than they were warranted by the law of Moses, they ceased to be godly princes; and so long as our own princes kept themselves within the like bounds, their supremacy was liable to no abuse. Should it prove otherwise, the puritans had no objection to the doctrine of resistance; or the lawfulness of transferring dominion from ungodly princes to the pious and elect.

But these doctrines James could by no means relish. He knew not in what light he might stand with his people in process of time. If in the light of a reprobate, here was a door left open for transferring his crown to a better man.

Bancroft therefore took care to salve this matter in the canon which enjoined subscription, by adding to the authority of the godly kings in scripture, that of the christian Emperors in the primitive church, godly or ungodly; and at the same time vesting James with the supremacy in ALL causes ecclesiastical and civil.*

This alteration put matters upon a very different footing, and made no small variation in the doctrine of the church. It is but dipping into the imperial law, wherever it opens at an

* See canon ii. xxxvi. and lv. The article to be subscribed to, concerning the queen's [Elizabeth's] supremacy, in the injunction appealed to in our thirty-seventh article, was thus worded: "The "queen's majesty is the chief governour, next under Christ, of this "church of England, as well in ecclesiastical as civil causes." Which may be compared with the first of the three articles enjoined to be subscribed by our thirty-sixth canon.

ecclesiastical case, to be convinced, that the christian emperors far outstripped the jewish kings, in the powers they claimed and exercised over the church.* But,

2. The passage in *the book of conference*, which gave offence, was chiefly this. In the sixteenth article of our church it is said, that *after we have received the holy ghost we may fall from grace.* Dr. Reynolds imagined this might seem to cross the doctrine of predestination, unless some such words were added as, *yet neither totally nor finally*, which he desired might be done by way of explanation. He likewise desired that the nine Lambeth articles, drawn up by Whitgift, might be inserted in the book of articles.

Dr. Bancroft was highly provoked at this, and observed, " that very many in those days, " neglecting holiness of life, presumed too " much on persisting in grace; laying all their " religion on predestination; *if I shall be saved, I shall be saved;* which he termed a " desperate doctrine, shewing it to be contrary to good divinity, and the true doctrine " of predestination; wherein we should rather " reason *ascendendo*, than *descendendo*, thus, " *I live in obedience to God, in love with my* " *neighbour; I follow my vocation, &c. there-* " *fore I trust God hath elected me, and pre-* " *destinated me to salvation.* Not thus, which " is the usual course of argument, *God hath* " *predestinated me to life; therefore, though* " *I sin never so grievously, yet I shall not be*

* They who chooſe not to turn over voluminous codes of the imperial law, may find what is here advanced tolerably well made out in father Paul's Hiſtory of Beneficiary Matters.

" *damned;* for *whom he loveth, he loveth to* " *the end.* Whereupon, he shewed his ma- " jesty, out of the next article, what was the " doctrine of the church of England touching " predestination, in the very last paragraph ; " namely, we must receive God's promises in " such wise as they be generally set forth to " us in the holy scriptures ; and, in our doings, " that will of God is to be followed, which we " have expressly declared unto us in the word " of God."*

The bishop was much in the right, to shew his majesty only the very last paragraph of the seventeenth article. Had he turned the king's attention to the foregoing paragraphs, his majesty would have seen, that his learned harangue was rank Arminianism, and a flat contradiction to the said article ; which actually argues, as the bishop termed it, *descendendo ;* inferring *the walking religiously in good works, and attaining to everlasting felicity,* from *previous predestination.*†

* Phœnix, vol. I. p. 151,

† A certain pamphleteer having objected to the Engliſh clergy, that they ſubſcribed articles which they did not believe ; Dr. George Fothergill of Oxford undertook their defence in the poſtſcript or appendix to a faſt-ſermon preached before that univerſity, February 17, 1758. His aim is to ſhew, that the articles are not calviniſtical ; and one of his arguments is the " non-acquieſcence of the " calviniſts in the preſent ſet of articles, and their repeated attempts " either to get them worded more ſtrictly, or to have others ſuper- " added more determinate in their favour." It is plain, he had this motion of Dr. Reynolds in his eye, and probably took the hint from Heylin and Montague, whom he refers to, without knowing, or perhaps caring to know, how theſe writers have been refuted by Carleton, Hickman, and others. It appears, however, that the ſeventeenth article aſſerts calviniſtical predeſtination *deſcendendo* in poſitive terms, and is ſo far, according to Bancroft, falſe divinity.

When it came to the royal moderator's turn to determine this matter between the two parties, he contented himself with shuffling it off as well as he could. He chose not to disoblige the bishops; and yet in his own opinion was a rigid Calvinist, at this period at least. But however, as he began with approving very well what Bancroft shewed him in the last paragraph of the article, it is probable that this, and his refusing to admit the Lambeth articles into the public confession, might be among the speeches of some great ones, from which the puritans concluded, that the purpose and intention, if not the doctrine of the church, had varied from what it had been.

And let me remark, that these same puritans, in refusing to subscribe the doctrinal articles, when they saw this inclination in the bishops to put a new construction upon them, seem to have understood the nature of the case much better than our modern subscribers. What the bishops then aimed at (and what their successors have since accomplished,) was to bring men to a simple implicit subscription, without any reserve or limitation whatever. The puritans had all along subscribed the articles with various protests and exceptions against those which related to discipline. And these exceptions the bishops, in some cases at least, admitted. The doctrinal articles were subscribed by all parties without reserve; because the opinions of all parties were tolerably uniform

And, if the very laſt paragraph is Arminian, what will Dr. Fothergill get by ſhewing that he and his brethren ſubſcribe *ex animo* to contradictions?

with respect to the subject-matter of them. But now the case was altered. This variation in the purpose and intention of the church, made it unsafe for the puritans to subscribe the doctrinal articles implicitly, or without reserve. They did not think, as the generality of subscribers seem to think now, that they might be allowed to abound in their own sense, in what form soever they subcribed. They were wiser. They knew that the bishops, taking upon them to interpret the articles in the manner Bancroft had done at the conference, would put what construction they pleased upon their subscription, against which they had found by experience, all their subsequent remonstrances would signify nothing. They knew, in short, the bishops had suppressed the protestations they had made with respect to the disciplinarian articles, and proceeded against them as revolters, and as though they had subscribed all the articles implicitly. And therefore they wisely avoided the snare, and kept themselves out of their power.*

It does not appear, however, that archbishop Bancroft made any farther attempt to introduce Arminianism into the church. And one pretty clear proof that he did not, is that he authorised Rogers's Exposition in the year 1607; which, as a very competent judge observes, went upon the *Calvinistical frame.*† The reason, probably, was, that he found the king not sufficiently pliable to come into his notions. Doctrinal matters, therefore, continued still upon the old foundation, notwith-

* See Pierce's Vindication, p. 109, 110.

† Hickman's animadverhions on Heylin's Quinq. Hift. p. 218.

standing the suspicions of the puritans, till Bancroft's death, which happened in the year 1610.

He was succeeded by George Abbot, a man of a very different character in all respects.

The next year, 1611, happened the ruffle between James I. and the states of Holland, concerning Vorstius, who was called by the University of Leyden to succeed Arminius, as their divinity-professor. The king's remonstrances against this promotion proving ineffectual, his majesty thought proper to attempt the confutation of Vorstius's book *de Deo*, in a formal controversial writing; in which he calls "Arminius a seditious and heretical preacher, an infector of Leyden with heresy, and an enemy of God; and withal, he complains of his hard hap, not to hear of him before he was dead; and that all the reformed churches in Germany had with open mouth complained of him."*

* See Harris's Hist. and critical account of the life and writings of James I. p. 124. Dr. Harris says, "James is said to have been excited to declare against Vorstius by Abbot, archbishop of Canterbury; and it is not unlikely. Most of the ecclesiastics of that time abounded with a fiery zeal, which frequently hurried them into actions not to be justified." p. 119.——This information comes, it seems, from La Roche: Abridgement, vol. I. p. 318. but, I apprehend, without the least good authority. Fuller says not a word of Abbot's being concerned in this matter. And Heylin makes no remark upon his silence, which, attached as he was to the opinions of Vorstius, and rancorously disaffected to Abbot, he would certainly have done, had he known of any just grounds for the story. Heylin himself says indeed (having just mentioned the king's declaration against Vorstius, and his majesty's animosity against the Remonstrants)—"Some think, he [James] was drawn into it by the powerful persuasions of archbishop Abbot and bishop Monta-

I cite this passage only to shew, that king James at this period, was no friend to the Arminians.

" gue, who then much governed his counſels in all church-concern-
" ments." Hiſt. Preſb. p.402. But, beſides that this relates to the king's general diſpoſition towards the Remonſtrants, he immediately ſubjoins three other conjectures, and adopts the laſt as moſt rational, viz. reaſon of ſtate. If Sir Ralph Winwood had mentioned the king's being inſtigated againſt Vorſtius by Abbot, I take it for granted, Dr. Harris would have cited him, inſtead of La Roche. In the mean time, the compilers of Abbot's life, in the *Biographia Britannica*, tell us, that, " when it was found difficult to obtain from " the ſtates that ſatisfaction [in the matter of Vorſtius] which the " king deſired, his grace, in conjunction with the lord Treaſurer " Saliſbury, framed an expedient for contenting both parties." And for this they cite Winwood's Memorials. This does not look like the fiery zeal of an inſtigator. Not to mention that Abbot was too wiſe and too good a man, to approve of king James's weak and licentious manner of writing againſt Vorſtius. That Abbot had no cordial affection for the Arminians, is very credible, and very accountable, inaſmuch as it was the univerſal opinion of the wiſeſt and beſt of men in thoſe times, that Arminianiſm was a back-door to popery; and certain events in our own country have not at all contributed to diſcredit that opinion, as I obſerve below. The archbiſhop's diſaffection to Grotius was owing to the endeavours and propoſals of the latter towards a coalition of the proteſtants and papiſts, which every wiſe and conſiſtent proteſtant, in every period ſince the Reformation, as well as Abbot, has conſidered as a ſnare, and treated accordingly. In the famous letter of Abbot's againſt Grotius, preſerved in Winwood, the worſt part of that great man's character is taken from the report of others, and might make the worſe impreſſions upon the archbiſhop's mind, as his grace was aware of the pernicious tendency of Grotius's negotiations with James and his arminianizing prelates, particularly by his joining with the latter in advancing maxims in favour of arbitrary power. For the reſt, there never was a prelate freer from the fiery zeal of an eccleſiaſtic, perhaps hardly ever a private clergyman, than George Abbot. It was reckoned his diſgrace in the next reign, that he did not tread in the ſteps of the fiery Bancroft. " Had Laud ſucceeded Bancroft," ſaid they, " and the project of conformity been followed without interrup-
" tion, the enſuing ſchiſm might have been prevented." Fuller's *Worthies*, SURRY, p. 83.——" He was ſlack and negligent," ſays the firebrand Heylin, " in the courſe of his government, and

In the year 1613, James, indeed, seems to have had more qualified sentiments concerning the Arminian system. He tells the states, in a letter, dated March 6th that year, that, "having seen, in a letter sent to him by the "Sieur Caron, their ambassador, the opinions "of both parties, and the arguments by which "they are supported, discussed at large, it did "not appear to him, that either of them were "inconsistent with the truth of the christian "faith, and the salvation of souls." [La Roche, Abridgement, vol. I. p. 325.] Dr. Harris likewise quotes Sir Ralph Winwood for the same fact.*

The two historians last cited, Messieurs La Roche and Harris, call this a contradiction in James; and a contradiction, the latter observes, was nothing to him. But, I apprehend, the most inconstant man breathing, if he changes his mind ten times in a day, has some reason or motive for it, which operates *pro hàc vice.*

The case appears to have been this. Grotius

"too indulgent to that party, which Bancroft had kept under with "such just severity." Hist. Presb. p. 389.—If to this we add, the noble stand he made against the Spanish match; his unwearied endeavours and vigilance against popery; his spirited letter to James I. on that subject; and his not only refusing to license, but confuting the positions in Sibthorp's sermon;—these particulars, and his uniform adherence to the same principles during his whole life, oblige me to think, that Mr. La Roche, or rather, perhaps, Brandt, was misinformed with respect to Abbot's exciting king James to declare against Vorstius; and that, taking the whole of that archbishop's character together, no ecclesiastic of that time, and very few of any other time, have less abounded with a fiery unjustifiable zeal, than archbishop Abbot.

* Life of James I. p. 124

was very fond of a scheme he had projected and entertained, of uniting the Roman Catholics and protestants, wherein he was for making concessions to the papists, which the protestants abroad would never come into. It appears by a letter of Casaubon to Grotius, which bears date January 27, 1612-13, that Grotius had sent some papers to Casaubon upon this subject, which the latter had communicated to James, who greatly approved them; and he tells Grotius, that "he had found many English bishops, eminent for their piety and learning, who revolved in their minds night and day the same thoughts with himself."* Which was to say, that these bishops would have made the same concessions to the papists, that Grotius contended for. That James was in the same way of thinking, is notorious from other documents; particularly, his speech to his first parliament.† Probably he had not considered how far he must depart from the *confession of faith* in which he had been educated, before the healing measures of Grotius could take place, till Monsieur Caron put into his hands the rescript he mentions in his letter to the states. At this time too the Arminians bid fair for being the triumphant party in the low countries; Grotius and Barnevelt being employed by the states to draw up the edict intended to restore tranquillity between the Gomarists and Arminians,‡ which edict, accor-

* Casaubon's Epistles, 655, *Edit. Brunswick*, 1556.

† See the speech in Rapin Thoyras, and that historian's remarks upon it.

‡ Burigni's Life of Grotius, p. 47

ding to Casaubon, was highly approved of by James and his bishops.*

* Casaubon Epist. 963. *edit. Almeloveen.* In this epistle Casaubon informs Grotius, that "he had discoursed very particularly "with the king, the lord archbishop, and other prelates of eminent "learning, concerning the edict of the states; that the king, and "all who read it, very much approved and applauded the design; "—that the king, and other most considerable men, approved not "only the design, but the formulary of the edict, on account of its "keeping clear of manichæism on the one hand, and of pelagianism "on the other, and confirming that doctrine which ascribes the be-"ginning, the progress, and the end, of our salvation to God alone, "without introducing a contempt for good works." After Grotius had received this letter from Casaubon, the edict was printed; which was no sooner done, than it was briskly attacked and censured by the contra-remonstrants. Grotius thought himself obliged to defend it (as it was probably his own manufacture); and, among other things, lays great stress on the approbation of king James, archbishop Abbot, and other English divines; referring for his authority to this epistle of Casaubon [vide *Grotii Opera Theolog.* tom. iii. Lond. 1679. p. 197.] In a note subjoined to this passage in the second edition of *The Confessional*, some surprize was expressed, that archbishop Abbot should be found among the approvers of the edict, as he had no great affection either for the projects or opinions of Grotius; and it now appears to be a debateable point, how far the archbishop approved this edict, or whether at all, and that on the evidence of Casaubon himself. Mr. Le Vassor, at the end of the fourth book of his History of Lewis XIII. informs us, that "the contra-remonstrants produced letters from England, import-"ing, that neither the king, nor the persons of the highest dignity "in the church of England, did approve of the edict and conduct "of the states of Holland;" that is, neither of the formulary, nor of the design. Mr. Le Vassor indeed determines for the remonmonstrants, upon the presumption, that "the testimony of Casaubon, "who had himself discoursed the king and prelates upon the sub-"ject" (and whose integrity, he says, was "equal to his consum-"mate knowledge) was preferable to the anonymous letters alledged "by the contra-remonstrants." I own, I am one among others who do not rate Casaubon's integrity so high as his knowledge. Observe, I am only concerned for archbishop Abbot's sincerity and consistency, without inquiring into the sentiments of the others concerning this edict. And what says Casaubon of the archbishop? why, that he discoursed with him very particularly on the subject,

With these impressions upon his mind, James wrote the abovementioned letter to the states.

but he does not say what was the result of that conversation. He says moreover, that they who read the edict, highly approved and applauded the design. But he does not say, that the archbishop so much as read it. But, however, it is not improbable, that the archbishop might approve the design, considered merely as a design to promote peace and union among the contending parties, without any consideration had of the terms of the edict, or the formulary, which it is impossible the archbishop should approve, consistently with the principles he was known to espouse all his life. Nor indeed do Casaubon's words necessarily imply that he did. *Neque vero*, says the epistle, *consilium duntaxat rex, et alii viri gravissimi probavere, sed et formulam quoque ipsam.* But that the archbishop was one of these other most considerable men, does not appear. I have said above, that the archbishop's approbation of the edict is a questionable point, even on the evidence of Casaubon himself; and I think even thus far we see enough to make that good. What follows is still more to the purpose. The latter part of this epistle of Casaubon, as exhibited in Almeloveen's edition 1709 (which I had but very lately an opportunity of consulting), specifies three exceptions taken to the edict in its present form, in England. The first of these exceptions was to a doctrinal point. The contra-remonstrants held, that *there were some persons whom God invited to salvation, to whom he had decreed not to give salvation.* The edict reprobated this doctrine, and established the contrary proposition. To which *Casaubon* says, *Atqui si multi vocati, pauci electi*, Matth xx. 16. *Si, ut toties repetit Paulus, certus est servandorum numerus, quos ab æterno Deus elegit; sequitur necessario, non eodem proposito, neque pari efficacia ad salutem omnes homines vocari. Hoc igitur si auctores edicti negare voluerint, multi sine dubio existent, qui eorum sententiæ sese sint opposituri.* The second offensive matter was, that in this edict, "the right to decide concerning articles of "faith is given to the civil magistrate," to which the king himself objected. And the third exception was taken to the word *educamus*, which was used in the edict, to describe the care taken by the states of the reformed churches within their jurisdiction, and seemed to encroach on the province of teaching and instructing, which the clergy claimed as their own peculiar. That these objections were made by king James and his divines, is clear from Casaubon's words in the 933d epistle of the Holland edition, viz. "*Mire enim illius* "*majestati placuit, illustrissimorum ordinum consilium: ipsis*

In the interval between this time and the assembling of the synod of Dort, our histories afford no interesting accounts of king James's theological sentiments. Casaubon, in one of his letters to Grotius, then in England, tells him, that the bishop of Bath and Wells was never from the king's side.* And that the

" *quoque formula omnibus* HIC *probata, præter admodum pauca,* " *de quibus ea libertate ad te scripsi quam postulabat fides mea.*" It is true, the points objected to were not many; but they were of the last importance among the divines of those days, and, in my apprehension, affected the whole edict as given by Grotius, who, notwithstanding Casaubon's extenuation, would well understand the force of them; and that, no doubt, was the occasion of suppressing the latter part of the epistle in the two editions of these epistles preceding Almeloveen's. How that editor came by this additional part of the 963d epistle, he does not inform us. Wherever it lay hid, the reasons for concealing it might be supposed to have ceased, and it might be given as a matter of mere curiosity on a point of history, no longer interesting to the parties concerned in the transaction. But what shall we say for Mr. La Roche, who, in his *Abridgement of Brandt's History*, gives us only the first part of the letter, without taking the least notice of these exceptions to the formula of the edict, though Almeloveen's edition of Casaubon's epistles had been extant sixteen years before his said Abridgement? It is possible, indeed, he might not know the epistle was mutilated, and therefore gave it just as he found it in Brandt. But it is also possible that some remonstrants contemporary with Mr. La Roche might think it for the honour of their predecessors, that this edict of the states should have the full approbation of the civil and ecclesiastical powers in England. It is to be lamented that these little frauds should so frequently occur in the works even of the most eminent writers. There is nothing so mean, to which they will not descend to serve their party. Had Grotius, in his defence of the edict, taken notice of these exceptions of which Casaubon had apprised him in the latter part of his letter, the testimony of the king of England and his divines in favour of the edict, exhibited by Casaubon in the beginning of it, would have been of no use to him. Indeed these exceptions fairly decide the dispute mentioned by Le Vassor, and shew, that the intelligence received by the contra-remonstrants, concerning the sentiments of the English with respect to the edict, was the most authentic.

* Epist. 888. ed. Alm.

Arminian clergy were not wanting in improving their confidence with the king, appears from the following passage : " It was insinu-
" ated to the king, what dangers would pro-
" ceed by training up of young students in the
" grounds of Calvinism ;—that there was no
" readier way to advance the presbyterial go-
" vernment in this kingdom, than by suffer-
" ing young scholars to be seasoned with Cal-
" vinian doctrines: that it was very hard to
" say, whether of the two, either the puritan
" or the papist, were more destructive of mo-
" narchical government.*

This was touching James in a tender part, and procured some injunctions to be sent to Oxford, concerning subscription to the three articles in the 36th canon, concerning the method of study, and some other regulations relative to the demeanour of scholars, and their school-exercises ;† but nothing to the disparagement of doctrinal Calvinism, answerable to the expectations of the insinuators.

For, by this time, matters had taken a very different turn in Holland. Some cities did not approve the edict abovementioned. The prince of Orange had declared against the Arminians, and had a large majority both of the magistrates and divines on his side : and the common cry was, to have these disputes settled in a national synod. These things (which may be seen in La Roche and other histories) could not fail of making impressions upon James, and would restrain him from declaring in favour of

* Heylin's life of Laud, p. 71. *sub anno* 1616.

† Ibid. p. 72.

Arminianism, to which he was, most probably, averse in his heart.*

Accordingly, he chose six divines to assist at the synod of Dort, who were well known to be zealous Calvinists. These, among other things, had it in their instructions, "to advise "those churches to use no innovation in doc- "trine—to teach the same things which were "taught twenty or thirty years past in their "own churches—and nothing which contra- "dicted their own confessions—to consult, at "all times, his majesty's ambassador [Sir "Dudley Carleton,] who, says the king, un- "derstandeth well the questions and differ- "ences among them."†

These divines concurred with the synod in approving and ratifying the Belgic confession,‡ and consequently in condemning the remonstrants; and when they returned home, were received by James with approbation, and courteous entertainment. Three of these he afterwards preferred to bishopricks, viz. Hall, Carleton, and Davenant; and Balcanqual was made master of the Savoy. These particulars may be found in Fuller's church-history, and other memorials of those times; and are suffi-

* Dr. Featly, according to Mr. Hickman, affirmed, that king James, not many weeks before his death, called the Arminians Heretics. *Animadversions*, 2d edit. p. 231.

† "Grotius," says Mr. La Roche, "found out [while he was "in England] that the English ambassador at the Hague [the same "Sir Dudley Carleton] had represented to the archbishop of Can- "terbury, the ecclesiastical affairs of Holland to the prejudice of the "Remonstrants." *Abridgement*, vol. I. p. 326.

‡ In all doctrinal points: entering a protest, that the church of England disapproved some of the disciplinarian canons. *Fuller*, X. p. 81, 82.

cient to shew, that at this period, and for some time after, James was no favourer of the Arminian theology.

Perhaps indeed there never was a period, from his first accession to the English crown, till the day of his death, when he would not have made his divinity bend to his politics. He hated the puritans, not for their doctrines, but for their dislike to a prelacy. He thought a monarchy as necessary for the church as for the state; and had much the same idea of presbyterian classes and consistories, that he had of parliaments. He imagined, that whoever was not a friend to episcopal power, must have the same objections to that of kings. And perhaps he was not much mistaken, with respect to his own contemporaries.

The Calvinists in Holland strenuously insisted, that the church, constituted, as theirs was, upon a republican model, had the sole power of defining matters of faith, and of distinguishing between points necessary and unnecessary; and they held, that the civil magistrate was bound to inforce the church's decisions, and to discourage and suppress all sects and heresies contrary thereunto. They went farther still. They held that the civil magistrate who did not his duty in this province, ceased to be a child of God, and might be deposed from his office. And some of them carried this matter so far, that, upon some remissness in the states to suppress what they called *the enemies of God*, a deputation had been sent from the clergy, to offer the sovereignty of six of the seven united provinces to queen Elizabeth.*

* La Roche, vol. I. p. 229.

It cannot be denied, that many of the English puritans entertained the same notions. Perhaps the greater part of them in secret. When any extraordinary countenance was shewn to papists, either by James, or indeed, before him, by Elizabeth, the puritans gave no obscure intimations of what they thought of the government; and the less discreet among them openly avowed the lawfulness of resisting ungodly princes, both in the reigns of Elizabeth and James.*

The king, however, was not so weak, but that he saw plainly, popery was at no great distance from Arminianism. The bent of the nation lay against both. And probably Abbot's influence with him, while it lasted, added to the principles (or, if you please, the prejudices) of his own education in Scotland, kept him in these sentiments, the rather perhaps as he did not see, how, what were called the factious attempts of the puritans, were countenanced by the divinity of Calvin.

It must be confessed, that with such a prince the Arminian bishops had but a difficult game to play: but they managed it like workmen; and in the end, turned even the most unfavourable circumstances to their own account.

Grotius, and the Remonstrants in Holland, pleaded for toleration;† and, from their hold-

* See Strype's life of Whitgift, p. 291. And Puckering's speech in Fuller's Worthies, Tit. *Yorkshire*, p. 201. Puckering, without doubt, exaggerated. But his word may be taken with respect to the point of the queen's supremacy in ecclesiastical causes.

† Quinquarticulanam litem tanti non facerem, nisi conjunctam sibi haberet eam, quæ est de discretione necessariorum dogmatum a non necessariis, sive de mutua christianorum tolerantia. *Episcopius, apud Hickman, Animadvers.* p. 122.

ing this principle, artfully enough suggested their superior respect for the civil powers; as that would keep church-authority under the hatches.

James had no idea of the righteousness of a toleration. And he saw that, if it took place in matters of doctrine, it might, upon equally good grounds, be claimed for opinions and practices relating to discipline. And perhaps his objection to the edict of the states general, mentioned before, might be founded upon the tolerating powers vested by it in the civil magistrate.

The Arminian bishops detested toleration as much as James could do, and for the same reasons; but went much farther than their brethren in Holland, in their concessions to the civil power; alledging, that sovereignty, particularly in monarchs, was *jure divino*, and uncontroulable. They knew this principle could do them no harm, qualified as it was, by James's notions of Episcopacy; and for the rest, it was a sure bait to draw him in to whatever they might see fit to build upon it.

But the great difficulty lay here. They had not only the king, but the people to manage. The puritan party was strong, and respectable for the quality, as well as the numbers, of its adherents. And it would not be so easily comprehended by the people, how they, who were so perfectly right in their divinity, could be so far wrong in their politics. The next step then was to cast some slur upon the doctrines of the puritans, and, if possible, to wean both the king and people from their fondness for them.

Fuller, in his church-history, informs us, that the archbishop of Spalato was the first who used the word puritan, to signify the defenders of matters doctrinal, in the English church. "Formerly," says he, "the word was only ta-"ken to denote such as dissented from the "hierarchy in discipline and church-govern-"ment, which was now extended to brand "such as were anti-arminian in their judg-"ments." And he confesses, that the word, in this extensive signification, was afterwards improved to asperse the most orthodox in doctrine, and religious in conversation.*

These *improvers* were the Arminian bishops and their adherents. We have seen above, what they insinuated to James, upon occasion of obtaining from him certain injunctions sent to Oxford, anno 1616. But still the established articles of religion were on the side of the doctrinal puritans. The writers against Arminianism made that appear beyond dispute: and Laud himself durst not deny it.

The next step, therefore, was to get the puritan party silenced, from preaching or printing any thing upon the subject. Abbot's influence with king James had been broken, by his untractable firmness in the matter of the Earl of Essex's divorce, as well as by other accidents; and a misfortune in his private conduct had afforded room for the full effect of Laud's intrigues, who lost no opportunity of recommending himself and his system to James.

* Fuller, Ch. Hist. B. x. p. 99, 100. and Defens: Eccles: Anglic: contra M. Anton: de Domines archiep: Spolat: injurias a Crakanthorp. Edit a Johanne Barkham, S. T. D. 1625. 4to. cap: xxxv. p. 212. and Sanderson's Sermons, 4to. quoted in *Occasional Remarks*, part II.

The first fruits of Laud's power over the king appeared in those injunctions, or directions, bearing date August 4th, 1622, wherein, among other things, it was enjoined, that "no preacher, under the degree of a bishop "or a dean,—should from thenceforth presume to preach—the deep points of *Predestination*, *Election*, *Reprobation*, or of the "*universality*, *efficacity*, *resistibility*, *or irresistibility*, *of* God's *Grace*, *&c.*"*

One might ask, how James could reconcile himself to a measure, which, in the case of the edict of the states-general, had given him pain? That is to say, how he could, as a civil magistrate, assume a right of making decrees in matters of religion?

His divines would have told us, upon this occasion, 1. That he was a civil magistrate *jure divino;* which was not the case with republican magistrates. 2. That, by a saving clause in the end of the directions, this was only a kind of interim, till the next convocation should assemble.

This, however, was all that James could be brought to during his reign; unless the declaration, at the head of the xxxix articles, is to be ascribed to him; which however is a problem I cannot take upon me to solve; nor is it very material.

* Heylin's hiſtory of Laud, p. 97. who confeſſes that his hero had a hand in digeſting and drawing up theſe injunctions. What cenſures were paſſed upon them, may be ſeen in Wilſon and Fuller, *ſub anno* 1622, who both give the injunctions at large. Theſe cenſures are acknowledged by Heylin himſelf with great indignation, who, as a leſs ſuſpected witneſs than the others in theſe points, may be conſulted, p. 99.

In his sucessor, Laud found a king more to his mind. James had no personal esteem for Laud, and gave him a bishoprick with much reluctance. His busy spirit was accordingly, during James's reign, obliged to operate in subordination to some prelates, who had more of the king's confidence.

But Charles I. was wholly at Laud's devotion. Hitherto the Calvinists were barely silenced, and perhaps hardly that. Wilson tells us, "the archbishop recommended it to his diocesans, that these directions might be put "in execution with caution."* And Fuller says, "these instructions were not pressed with "equal rigour in all places, and that some "over-active officials were more busy than "their bishops, &c."† However, it is natural to suppose these injunctions had some effect; especially among those who expected to rise in the church.

It was not, however, sufficient for Laud's purposes, barely to silence Calvin. He wanted to have Arminius take the chair, and to dictate to the church of England, instead of the other.

To try how this would take, he sets Montague to work, a bold hot-headed man (but a good scholar ;‡) who scrupled not to exemplify and avow the political, as well as the theological, creed of Arminius, in the most posi-

* Life and reign of king James, p. 201.

† Ch. Hiſt. X. Book, p. 111.

‡ *Selden, de diis Syris*, p. 361. allows that Montague was *Græcè simul et Latinè doctus.*

tive and explicit terms. Take the story from an unquestionable authority:

" Mr. Richard Montague, in the one and " twentieth of king James, had published a " book, which he named, *A new Gag for an* " *old Goose*, in answer to a popish book, inti- " tuled, *A Gag for the new Gospel.* The bu- " siness was then questioned in parliament,* " and committed to the archbishop of Canter- " bury [Abbot,] and ended in an admonition " to Montague.

" Afterwards, the bishops of the Arminian " party, consulted [consulting] the propaga- " tion of the five articles condemned in the " synod of Dort, concluded that Mr. Monta- " gue, being already engaged in the quarrel, " should publish this latter book [*Appello* " *Cæsarem,*] at first attested by their joint " authorities, which afterwards they withdrew " by subtility, having procured the subscrip- " tion of Dr. Francis White [Dean of Carlisle,] " whom they left to appear alone in the testi- " mony, as himself oft-times complained pub- " licly. The archbishop disallowed the book, " and sought to suppress it; nevertheless it " was printed, and dedicated unto king " Charles, whereby *that party did endeavour* " *to engage him in the beginning of his reign.* " The house appointed a committee to exa- " mine the errors therein, and gave the arch-

* Upon the complaint of two divines of the diocese of Norwich, Mr. Yates and Mr. Ward. " They accused him of dangerous er- " rors of Arminianism and Popery, deserting our cause, instead of " defending it." Fuller, Ch. Hist. B. XI. p. 119. Yates afterwards wrote against Montague.

" bishop thanks for the admonition given to " the author, whose books they voted to be " contrary to the articles established by the " parliament, to tend to the king's dishonour, " and disturbance of church and state, and " took bond for his appearance."*

Charles at first attempted to take Montague out of the hands of the parliament, by claiming him for his chaplain, &c. But afterwards he thought better of it, and determined to leave him at their mercy; which being signified to Laud, by the Duke of Buckingham, " he " [Laud] thought it a matter of such ominous " concernment," says Fuller, " that he en- " tered the same in his diary, in these words: " *I seem to see a cloud arise, and threatening* " *the church of England; God for his mercy* " *dissipate it.*"†

But this little-spirited champion was not so to be baffled. He knew the duke's power with the king, and, in conjunction with the bishops of Rochester and Oxford, recommended Mr. Montague's cause to him, as the cause of the church of England.

Rushworth hath given us the topics they insisted on in this recommendation, which I shall here transcribe: taking leave to intermix such remarks as occur upon the several particulars of it.

" They shew, that some of the opinions " which offended many, were no other than " the resolved doctrine of this church."

* Rushworth, vol. I. p. 173.
† Church Hist. Book XI. p. 121.

The opinions here meant, were the opinions of those who maintained the *divine right* of kings, which was understood to be asserted in our established formularies both of doctrine and discipline. When our churchmen resolved these points in the reigns of queen Elizabeth and king James, they were opposing the king-killing doctrines of the papists. But not confining themselves to the confutation of arguments merely popish, they made the right of kings absolutely indefeasible in *all* cases; of which Laud and his crew made their advantage.

" —— And some of them are curious points, " disputed in the schools, and to be left to the " liberty of learned men to abound in their " own sense——."

These were the *five points* of doctrine, disputed between the Calvinists and Arminians. Could Laud have found the means to frame and establish a new set of articles, I am persuaded he would have left little room for the Calvinists to abound in their own sense. As things were circumstanced, he was to make the best of the present set, which was, by pleading in words for a latitude of senses, and by insinuating that these disputed points were matters of no great consequence, and might be innocently held either way. We shall see by and by how his actions contrasted these verbal pretences.

" —— It being the great fault of the coun- " cil of Trent to require subscription to school- " opinions, and the approved moderation of " the church of England, to refuse [*perhaps* re- " fute] the apparent dangers and errors of the " church of Rome; but not to be over busy " with scholastical niceties ——."

The council of Trent is brought in here only as a stalking horse. The insinuation is, that the council of Trent did, and the church of England did not, require subscription to these school-opinions in a determinate sense; the very reverse of which is the honest truth. "Melanchon, as may be seen above, accused "the council of Trent of making crafty de-"crees, that they might defend their errors "by things ambiguously spoken." That is to say, by such ambiguities, as permitted the Jesuits and Dominicans to abound in their own sense respectively, upon these very school-points.* And when Grotius came to plead the cause of the Arminians before the magistrates of Amsterdam, he alledged among other things, "that the doctrines disputed in Hol-"land had not been decided by the church of "Rome (and consequently not by the coun-"cil of Trent,) though she is extremely fond "of decisions." Which doctrines were the very same with the school-opinions disputed in England.† On the other hand, the apparent dangers and errors of the church of Rome, were doctrines and practices, so founded upon the Arminian side of these school-niceties, that the church of England did not think the apparent errors or dangers could be refused or refuted, without determining these school niceties the other way; which was accordingly done in the xxxix articles. Was Laud ignorant of all this, or was he playing the Jesuit? And, of

* See above, chap. iv. See likewise, Heylin's Quinquarticular Hist. p. 26. and Hickman's Animad. p. 42.

† La Roche, Abridgement, vol. I. p. 344.

all things, that *he* should talk of the *moderation* of the church of England!

" —— Moreover, in the present case, they " alledge, that in the time of Henry VIII. " when the clergy submitted to the king's su- " premacy, the submission was so resolved, " that, in case of any difference in the church, " the king and the bishops were to determine " the matter, in a national synod."

But who made the difference in the church *in the present case?* These very bishops. And was it not most reasonable, that they should be both judges and parties? But this was calculated for the meridian of Charles's apprehension; and to furnish him with an argument for taking Montague's cause out of the hands of the parliament.

" —— And if any other judge in matters " of doctrine be now allowed, we depart from " the ordinance of Christ, and the continual " practice of the church."

Had the parliament called for this ordinance of Christ, where would these prelates have found it? Had they forgot, that king Henry VIII. so lately quoted, passing by the bishops, and the national synod, made the universities of Europe judges in a very important point of doctrine?

" —— Herewithal they intimated, that, if " the church be once brought down below her- " self, even majesty itself would soon be im- " peached."

No bishop, no king.

" —— They say farther, that king James, " in his rare wisdom, approved *all* the opini- " ons in this book."

Perhaps some tolerably just notion may be formed, from what goes before, what opinions, concerning the five points, James approved. It is highly probable he continued a Calvinist in judgment, even to the very last. No doubt but he approved Montague's political principles.

" ——— And that most of the contrary opi-
" nions were debated at Lambeth, and ready
" to be published, but were suppressed by
" queen Elizabeth."

And were these opinions only debated at Lambeth? or only ready to be published? Surely Bancroft gave a different account of them at the Hampton-court conference. These bishops would have it believed, that queen Elizabeth suppressed these articles, out of a dislike to the subject-matter of them. Whereas the dislike was to the method used in the procuring of them, and to the archbishop's sending them to Cambridge, to be disputed in the schools. She was certainly displeased with Peter Baro, for espousing the contrary doctrines, which indeed gave the first occasion of framing these articles. And Baro being prosecuted in the Vice-chancellor's court at Cambridge, for contradicting these articles, after Whitgift had received orders to suspend them, the queen's suppression could amount to a very small matter, since it is plain they still continued to have their currency in Cambridge, as much as before.*

* Strype's life of Whitgift, book iv. chap. xvii. xviii. See likewise Sykes's reply to Waterland's Supplement.

"—And so continued [i. e. to be suppressed] "till of late they received countenance at the "synod of Dort, which was a synod of ano- "ther nation, and, to us, no way binding, "till received by public authority."

That king James did not continue to suppress the Lambeth articles, is plain from his sending them to Dort, as part of the doctrine of the church of England; and to Ireland, where they were incorporated with their articles of religion. And Mr. Pym, in his speech in parliament, Jan. 27, 1628, says expressly, *They were avowed by us and our state.** On the other hand, one would wonder, what, in the opinion of these bishops, amounted to "re- "ceiving the synod of Dort by public autho- "rity." King James sent, by a formal deputation, six of his divines to that synod, who concurred with it in its decisions, concerning all doctrinal matters. The king approved what they had done, and no churchmen in the kingdom were more favoured by him. This puts me in mind of Mr. Le Clerc's observation upon the conduct of the French divines, in regard to the council of Trent. In their public scholastic disputations, they cite the canons of that council, as decisive against the heterodox side of theological questions. But, being pressed with the absurdity of some of those canons, by their protestant adversaries, their cant is that the council of Trent was never received in France.†

* Rushworth, vol. 1. p. 647.

† Defense des Sentimens, &c: sur l'Hist. Critique. Lett. xiii.

"——— And they boldly affirm, that they "cannot conceive what use there can be of "civil government in the commonwealth, or "of external ministry in the church, if such "fatal opinions, as some are, which are oppo- "site to those delivered by Mr. Montague, "be publicly taught and maintained."

This may pass for what it is, a bold affirmation, and no more, calculated to blacken the puritan party, and to insinuate, that nothing they held, either with respect to religion or politics, could possibly be right.

"Such," says Rushworth, "was the opi- "nion of these forenamed bishops; but others, "of eminent learning, were of a different judg- "ment."*

And no wonder. It would be no easy matter to shew so much prevarication in reasoning, or so much falsehood and misrepresentation of facts, in any other rescript of the same length.

The event of this matter was, that Montague in the end was delivered from parliamentary punishment by a royal pardon: and, after the dissolution of the parliament, Laud had Charles in his hands, and molded him which way he would.

Laud, accordingly, got the prohibition to preach upon these controverted points, extended to deans and bishops; in consequence of which, bishop Davenant was convened before the council, where he was reprimanded by Harsnet, archbishop of York, for transgressing his majesty's declaration, in a Lent-ser-

* Rushworth, vol. I. p. 177.

mon at court, 1626 (the crafty Laud walking by the while, without speaking one word). Davenant insisted, that he had not broken the declaration, and they could not contradict him, but were forced to fly to his majesty's intention, which turned out to be, "that he "would not have this high point [of predesti- "nation] meddled withal, or debated, either "the one way, or the other."* It was but a very little before that Laud had said, "these "curious points should be left to the liberty "of learned men, to *abound in their own* "*sense.*" But the parliament, which differed from him on this head, was now dissolved; and most probably Laud never expected to see another.

I hope, the foregoing particulars may be sufficient to shew, that subscribing with a latitude, or taking particular articles in different senses, was an artifice of archbishop Laud's, to open a way for his own Arminian opinions.

He hath been followed, however, by many in this practice, who have neither had his views, nor approved his example, in other things; and who therefore must be supposed to have some reasons of their own, to determine them in a practice, which, at first sight, is hardly defensible. Let us consider what these reasons may be.

1. Then, it is generally understood, that the points in dispute between the Arminians and the Calvinists are points of no consequence, and may be held either way, without any detriment to the true faith.

* Fuller's Church Hist. b. xi. p. 138—141.

Dr. Nicholls calls them, " Theological points, " which do not affect the main of re- " ligion." So did Heylin before him; and he had it undoubtedly from his master Laud. King James too, once upon a time, thought fit to say, " that, if the subject of Vorstius's Here- " sies [in his book *de Deo*] had not been " grounded upon questions of higher quality, " than touching the number and nature of the " sacraments, the points of merit, of justifica- " tion, of pugatory, of the visible head of " the church, or any such matters, we should " never have troubled ouselves with the busi- " ness."

Upon which Mr. Tindal, the translator of Rapin Thoyras, thus descants: "As if wrong " notions or errors concerning the essence of " God were more pernicious than such cor- " rupt notions and principles, as are destruc- " tive of morality, and repugnant to God's " moral character "* Such, I suppose, as Mr. Tindal takes the notions and principles of the Calvinists (among others) to be; and consequently esteems them points of great importance. It is much, however, if Vorstius or his followers did not draw some conclusions of the moral kind, from their speculations on the essence of God.

Bishop Burnet, in his travels, met with an eminent divine among the lutherans in Germany, upon whom he pressed an union with the calvinists, as necessary upon many accounts. To which the said divine answered,

* Tindal's Rapin, 8vo. 1730. vol. ix. p. 333.

that, "he wondered much to see a divine of "the church of England press that so much "on him, when we, notwithstanding the "dangers we were then in, could not agree "our differences. They differed about im- "portant matters, concerning the attributes "of God and his providence; concerning the "guilt of sin, whether it was to be charged "on God, or the sinner; and whether men "ought to make good use of their faculties, "or if they ought to trust entirely to an irre- "sistible grace. These were matters of great "moment. But, he said, we in England "differed only about forms of government "and worship, and things which were in their "own nature indifferent, &c."*

It would be a very strange thing, if the scriptures, rightly understood, should give any real occasion to the question, whether the guilt of sin is to be charged on God or the sinner? But if occasion is given for such a dispute, whether real or imaginary, it is doubtless a point of high importance, since no such question can be decided, without bringing the supreme God into judgment, as a party, with one of his creatures, and subjecting him to the sentence of another of them. The scriptures, in truth, give no just occasion for any such controversy. But if occasion is taken for such disputes from creeds, confessions, and articles of religion of human device; and if, in particular, such a dispute may be raised from the express terms of our own articles, should

* Preface to Burnet's Exposition, at the end.]

not a serious and considerate man be cautious how he subscribes them? Would it not be inexcuseably rash to take it for granted, that they contain matters of no consequence?

Perhaps our present subscribers are generally, though not universally, of the Arminian persuasion.* I mean, such of them as are of

* Mr. La Roche indeed says, "The doctrine of Arminius, "whom that prince [James I.] called an enemy to God, has been "long ago the doctrine of the church of England." Abridgement, vol. 1. p. 319. I should be glad to know what the church *representative* would say to this, and whether they would allow of this representation of La Roche, or adopt that of another foreign divine, who argues thus, "Though the Arminians are particularly favoured "by the church of England; though Arminianism may be said to "have become predominant among the members of that church, or "at least to have lent its influence in mitigating some of its articles "in the private sentiments of those who subscribe them; yet the "thirty-nine articles of the church of England still maintain their "authority; and when we judge of the doctrine and discipline of any "church, it is more natural to form this judgment from its esta-"blished creeds and confession of faith, than from the sentiments "and principles of particular persons." See Dr. Maclaine's note [a] on Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 574, ed. 4to. By which it should seem, that the doctrine of the church of England is not, nor since the establishment of the xxxix articles ever was Arminian. Both these writers speak with great respect of the church of England on all occasions; and, I dare say, nothing was farther from the thoughts of either of them, when they made these observations, than to do the least dishonour to that church. The reason of their respective judgments, which soever of them you agree with, is obvious; namely, the apparent disagreement of the doctrine of many of the most eminent divines of the church of England, with the doctrine of the articles. And, after this, is it not a jest to talk of the xxxix articles as *a Confession of Faith and Doctrines, to the truth of which the Governors of the church of* England *have a right to require all those to subscribe who are admitted to the office of public teachers in it, by way of giving the governors of the church* sufficient assurance *of the soundness of their Faith and Doctrines?* This is Dr. *Rutherforth's* language in his *Vindication;* not indeed with respect to the xxxix articles of his own church, for some con-

any persuasion at all: for, I doubt, few of them consider (if indeed they know) the difference between that and the persuasion of the Calvinists. Surely it concerns such subscribers not a little, to be satisfied whether our present articles are truly and properly capable of an Arminian sense or not. But of this more by and by.

2. Another thing which draws in subscribers of the present generation is, that, whereas Arminianism was heretofore esteemed to be the back-door to popery and arbitrary power, that notion has, upon examination, been found to be utterly groundless, and the opinions so called, absolutely innocent of the charge.

"Rapin," says Mr. Tindal in a note, "as "well as most of our writers, espicially those "of the puritan party, seem to confound two "things, which have no manner of relation "to each other, viz. Arminianism, and high-"church principles." He then puts down five propositions, which, according to him, contain the Arminian doctrine, which the synod of Dort, in their wisdom, thought fit to condemn. After which he says, "now nothing "can be more evident, than that a man may "embrace all these opinions, without being "one jot the more a friend to popery, or ar-"bitrary power."*

fession of faith and doctrines to which his Vindication is applied, may be a very different confession of faith and doctrines from that contained in the said articles. And yet, as the learned professor takes the governors of the church of England, among others, into his patronage, one would think, he would hardly waste his precious time in vindicating to them a right which they do not exercise.

* Tindal's Rapin, ut supra, vol. x. p. 16.

Mr. Tindal should not have been so positive. He did not so much as know what the five Arminian points, condemned at the synod of Dort, were; as any one may be satisfied by comparing the propositions Mr. T. hath exhibited, with the genuine ones in La Roche's Abridgement of Brandt.

The Calvinists too, certainly inferred the lawfulness of resisting wicked and unrighteous princes, from their theological principles of Election and Grace.

Heylin says, that Calvin called the contrary doctrine *civil idolatry.** And Grotius, artfully enough, improved the prejudices which magistrates would entertain against these unprincely notions, to the advantage of his own party, by insinuating the infinite reverence which the principles of the Arminians obliged them to have for the civil powers. The English Arminians went still farther. By excluding Election from any share in the foundation of dominion, and substituting indefeasible hereditary right, *jure divino* in its place, resistance, even to a Nero or a Caligula, became a damnable sin. Laud, as we have seen, affirmed boldly, that civil government would be useless, if some fatal opinions, opposite to those of Montague, were to prevail. And Mr. Tindal himself confesses, that Laud, Neile, and Montague, were for setting the king above the laws. And I know some very worthy and eminent persons, warm and fast friends to the civil and religious rights of mankind, who are

* Hiſtory of the Preſbyterians, in the beginning.

of opinion to this hour, that resistance, even to wicked princes, cannot be justified upon religious principles, without having recourse to the theological doctrines of the ancient puritans and independents.

If the Arminians have learned to separate the divinity of their forefathers from their politics, it is so much the better for the public. But, I fear, they have not been altogether so successful in weeding their doctrine from the seeds of popery.

That case stands thus: The scandalous traffick of indulgences gave the first occasion to Luther to discover the corruptions of popery, and afforded him the first grounds of his opposition to them. But indulgences were founded on the merit of good works, and that again on freewill; and, what is more, were so founded by St. Paul's own reasoning: *To him that worketh is the reward not of grace, but of debt.**

The Reformers universally, in a greater or less degree, pursued Luther's scheme of interpretation. They thought they had very good grounds in scripture for excluding freewill from any share in the work of justification. And therefore, when the Arminians arose, the puritans apprehended, with great reason, that, by opening a door to Free-agency, it would be impossible to prevent purgatory, saint-worship, indulgences, &c. from breaking in along with it. And they who will take the pains to read Montague's Appeal, and Heylin's Introduc-

* Rom. iv. 4.

tion to his life of archbishop Laud, will easily discern, that their apprehensions were not groundless.

Whether the connection between Free-agency and merit is real throughout, or where it begins to be broken, I pretend not to decide, or even to examine; being determined, on the present occasion at least, to offend or disturb no man with my private opinions. One thing, however, I beg leave just to mention, in favour of the Calvinists; namely, that some very eminent men of the present generation have gone a great way in their philosophical disquisitions, towards vindicating the predestinarian theology of these our forefathers.* And, when it is considered, that so able a writer as Dr. Clayton, the late bishop of Clogher, could find no other way of establishing the free-will

* See Dr. Hartley's Observations on Man, *passim*; but particularly his *Remarks on the Mechanism of the human Mind*, at the end of the first volume. Thournseyor's Letters in the *Magasin Francois*, published 1750, 1751. In a former edition, I inadvertently added to these citations, the Preface to bishop Law's translation of King's Origin of Evil; for which I ask his pardon. The book was not then at hand; and I cited from my memory. But what I meant to cite was *A Preliminary Dissertation* concerning the *Fundamental Principle of Virtue or Morality*, prefixed to bishop Law's translation abovementioned, but the work of another hand. Perhaps it may be thought that I had no right to join this author to the other two; and to those who think so, I readily give up the point, after observing, that Dr. Hartley makes the mechanism of the human mind one consequence flowing from the doctrine of Associations, which was undeniably held, and pushed pretty far by the author of the Preliminary Dissertation, who, as I have been informed upon good authority, was the late reverend and ingenious Mr. GAY, fellow of Sidney college, in Cambridge.

or free-agency of man, but by putting such limitations as he has done upon the prescience of God, no reasonable man would hastily conclude, that the Calvinists have nothing material to say for themselves.*

* Thoughts on *Self-Love, Innate Ideas*, &c. Lond. 1753. The Apostle Paul hath said, *There must be heresies*, 1 Cor. xi. 9. not *ex necessitate rei ab intus*, but from the perverse nature of man, say his interpreters. Perhaps, if men had been candid, capable, and upright throughout, all their controversies, from Paul's time to this hour, might have been avoided, save one, that concerning predestination, which must probably have arisen at all events.—I am told, this note hath given offence, as it supposes the scriptures to give some countenance to the predestinarian hypothesis, as if it were capable of making impressions upon the judgment of the most enlightened minds. "Whereas," it is said "the errors and absurdi-"ties of that hypothesis have been as easily detected and confuted, "since the revival of letters and philosophy, as any other theologi-"cal dream of the darker ages." The objectors, I hope, will excuse me for saying, that I think this means no more than that arminianism has been for a great part of the last century, and as much of the present as hath run off, the ruling system of the times, though perhaps rather taken for granted by the generality, than espoused upon reasonable conviction. As far as I can judge, many of those who have censured the tenets of the calvinists, have been little beholden either to letters or philosophy for the arguments they have brought against them, and have seemed to me, amidst all the asperity with which they have censured them, almost utter strangers, either to the strength of their own cause, or the weakness of that of their adversaries. Some of them have treated the subject in so superficial a way, adorned indeed with all the pleasing elegancies of language, as hardly to touch the material objections either of the ancient or modern predestinarians. Will not these good people be a little surprized, that in the year 1769, a warm, but sensible writer, and no very contemptible reasoner, should arise, and call upon them to vindicate "their loose arminian principles from the charge of "tending to the rankest atheism?" [See the preface to a late tract, intituled, *The doctrine of absolute Predestination stated and asserted*; printed for J. Gurney, 1769, p. xvi.] They who have read another tract by the same hand, intituled *The Church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism*, will discern how

But, to leave the theoretical part of this pro-

unequal even the public orator of Oxford was to the task he had taken upon himself, and how pitiably he falls under the discipline of this shrewd and masterly Calvinist. Think not, gentle reader, there is any undue partiality in this commendation. The Devonshire Calvinist appears, by some slirts thrown out in the last-mentioned pamphlet, to have no greater predilection for *The Confessional*, than the Oxford Arminian; and from thence I once conjectured, that they were equally indisposed towards any relaxation of our present subscriptions; hoping, however, for the honour of their penetration, not with a common view of avoiding diversity of opinions touching true religion. I was however mistaken in my conjecture, and, in justice to the ingenious writer, as well as myself, I transcribe the following passage from the *Account of the Life of* JEROM ZANCHIUS, prefixed to *The Doctrine of absolute Predestination stated and asserted*, &c. p. xxiii. "I shall here beg leave to inter-"pose one question, naturally arising from the subject. What good "purpose do the imposition and the multiplication of unnecessary "subscriptions to forms of human composition, tend to promote? "'Tis a fence far too low, to keep out men of little or no principle; "and too high, sometimes, for men of real integrity to surmount. "It often opens a door of ready admission to the abandoned; who, "ostrich-like, care not what they swallow, so they can but make "subscription a bridge to secular interest; and for the truly honest, "it frequently, either excludes them from a sphere of action, wherein "they might be eminently useful, or obliges them to testify their "assent in such terms, and with such open professed restrictions, as "render subscription a mere nothing." And now it may be asked, what is the offence that the author of *The Confessional* hath given to this biographer of *Zanchius*? Do they not seem to be fellow-labourers in the same laudable cause? Let us examine. "The *re-*"*verend* and *dignified* author of *The Confessional* is a *faint*, when "set in competition with such divines." That is, with divines who endeavour to twist and torture calvinistic articles into a sense they are incapable of bearing. [*Church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism*, p. 26.] True, a *faint*, when compared with these men; but the sneer would have no sting, if it did not imply, that the said author is a most grievous *sinner*, when set in competition with this *reverend*, but *undignified*, Vindicator. And for what? Even for pleading for alterations, and crying out with the naughty Monthly Reviewers; "Our established forms are not such

blem for the present. Those old worthies who predicted the return of popery, in consequence

"as might be wiſhed, and ought to be re-modeled." *Ibid.* p. 25. But if our eſtabliſhed forms, conſidered as human compoſitions, ought not to be re-modeled, they ought to be profeſſed, uſed, and taught, as they now ſtand in our authorized books. And if ſo, I would deſire to know, why they ought not to be ſubſcribed? Is the man who profeſſes and teaches doctrines which he doth not approve, ever the more a *ſaint*, becauſe he doth not ſubſcribe them? And, in this caſe, what will you gain by taking away ſubſcriptions? The door will open and ſhut, juſt as it did before. Men of integrity will no more profeſs and teach according to formularies they do not approve, than they will ſubſcribe to them; and the abandoned will profeſs and teach whatever the authorized book you lay open before them appears to preſcribe. But perhaps we are all this while miſtaken; and the learned Vindicator, with all his perſuaſion of the no good purpoſe anſwered by impoſing ſubſcriptions in general, may make a reſerve in favour of our xxxix articles and homilies; ſo at leaſt I conjecture from the profound reſpect he pays them in the following paſſage: "Not the ſermons and private writings even of our "reformers themſelves are to be taken for authentic teſts of our eſta-"bliſhed doctrines as a church, but thoſe STUBBORN THINGS, "called ARTICLES and HOMILIES, which have received the "ſanction of law, and the ſtamp of public authority. Theſe ſtub-"born things (for ſuch they are) ſtill remain BLESSED BE GOD, "to ſtare ſome certain folks in the face, and to demonſtrate the glaring "apoſtacy of ſuch as *ſay they are jews, and are not, but are found* "*liars.* To theſe ſtubborn things we are to appeal, by theſe every "ſubſcriber is bound, and from theſe our doctrines muſt be learnt." *Vind.* p. 41. Does not this read as if theſe articles and homilies were ſomething more than human compoſitions, even as ſtubborn and authentic things as the ſcriptures themſelves? Would a man of common charity bleſs God that theſe ſtubborn things remain only as ſtumbling blocks to weak brethren, to ſtare them out of countenance, and to make men liars, who perhaps very honeſtly think that ſome parts of them are in no agreement with the word of God. If this be the only uſe of their ſtubbornneſs, away with them, let them be no longer found among the furniture of a chriſtian church; and rather let God be glorified, that his word hath its free courſe, uncumbered and unadulterated with the fallible and precarious doctrines and commandments of men. Had it not been for this ſtubborn dignity aſcribed to our articles and homilies, I ſhould have concluded

of the introduction of Arminianism, were not so widely mistaken, as to the event, as may be

that this ingenious writer had a more generous view in condemning imposed subscriptions, than merely to accommodate his friend Zanchius with an apology for subscribing first the Augsburgh Confession with a MODO, and afterwards the articles proposed by the assembly convened by the senate of Strasburgh, without one. Zanchius's second subscription was in these words. *Hanc doctrinæ formulam ut piam agnosco, ita etiam recipio.* The divines, who required it, understood it to be a simple and absolute acknowledgment of the orthodoxy of the subscribed articles, and treated it accordingly: and so I believe would any plain man have done, had not Hospinian informed us, that Zanchius meant, *quatenus* IPSE *formam piam* JUDICABAT. Hist. sacrament. pars II. p. 543. which might possibly reprobate nine-tenths of these articles in the judgment of Zanchius. Mr. Bayle calls this a *mental reservation*, and, I own, I cannot but be of his mind. Much more willingly do I mention another thing recorded by Hospinian, greatly for the honour of Zanchius. Upon his coming to Strasburgh in the year 1553, being required to subscribe to the Augsburgh Confession, he alledged, among other reasons why he could not subscribe to it *simply* and *absolutely*, that, *that honour was due to the sacred scriptures alone, because they alone are, and ought to be, the rule and standard of all christian doctrine.* Ibid. p. 535. If Zanchius was in the right in this instance, and if his late biographer and translator does not set the xxxix articles of the church of England upon a level with the sacred scriptures (concerning which, it is hoped, he will, at some time, explain himself) cannot he conceive it possible that some persons may be as honestly scrupulous about the predestinarian articles in our collection, as Zanchius was about the sacramental ones in the Augustan Confession? and may not such persons subscribe the one with a previous limitation, as innocently and uprightly as Zanchius subscribed the other? Observe, I do not bring the NOWELLISTS within this case, who, having first wrested the predestinarian articles to an arminian sense, pretend to subscribe them simply and absolutely. They still lie at the mercy of the *Vindicator*. Indeed I have no suspicion that it was arminianism which unfainted the author of *the Confessional* in the opinion of the said *Vindicator*. So much is said in that virulent pamphlet (as Dr. Nowell has it) on the side of calvinism, that some of the wise heads of Oxford have, without any modification, represented the author as in the very bonds of that iniquity; and had the Confessionalist confined himself to that disquisi-

imagined. They had good reasons to expect it, from the whole conduct of Laud and his fel-

tion, it is probable he might have kept his place, though an inferior one, in the ingenious Vindicator's calendar. But having had the effrontery to solicit a review of our trinitarian formularies, he could hardly escape the wrath of the Vindicator, who chuses to connect the reputation of the church of England so closely with that of *Jerom Zanchius*. This same Zanchius, it seems, wrote a book, *de tribus* ELOHIM *uno eodemque* JEHOVA, "fraught" as his biographer assures us, "with the most solid learning and argument." Every one, however, has not been of this mind, as appears by the testimony of old Thomas Rogers, who, in a note on the 8th. article, gives us the following anecdote: "myself, some 28 years ago, heard a great "learned man, whose name upon another occasion afore is expressed "(to whose acquaintance I was artificially brought) which, in private "conversation betwixt him and myself, termed worthy Zanchius a "*fool* and an *ass* for his book *de tribus Elohim*, which refuteth the "new arians, against whose founders the creeds of Athanasius and the "Nicene were devised." Hence it appears, that to slur Athanasius, is to reflect upon Zanchius; and hence undoubtedly, the *original sin* of the author of *The Confessional;* who will think himself in luck if he fares no worse in the hands of the Vindicator, than his great learned man did in those of our primitive Expositor, who concludes his melancholy tale thus: "him I attentively heard," [I wish he had told us all he heard] "but could never since abide him, and "indeed, I never saw him since." An edifying instance how the *odium theologicum* operates upon the orthodox!—But the Vindicator hath discovered another of the *unsaintly* qualities of the author of *The Confessional*. He is a *scoffer*. One of Dr. Nowell's objections to the Lambeth articles is, that "they are urged against him-"self and his fellows, by the author of *The Confessional*." To which the learned Vindicator replies. "What if they are? does "that in the least impair their value? I am only concerned that "any, who now call themselves members of our church, should, by "deserting her principles, lay themselves open to the SCOFFS of "such authors." p. 54. A strange reflection, from a man who condescends to support the authority of the Lambeth articles by some of the same reasons and evidence which the author of *The Confessional* had, very seriously, and without the least shadow of a scoff, made use of before him! A strange rebuke, from a man who, before he dismisses these articles, relates the merriment of queen Elizabeth upon the manner in which they were procured, which is neither more nor

lows: and, though these were seasonably stopped in their career, their principles have

less than a bitter sarcasm on archbishop Whitgift, who called himself at least a member of the church of England!—A strange rebuke from a man who, rather than Dr. Nowell should not be sufficiently exposed for relying upon Lord Burleigh's disapprobation of these Lambeth articles, can indulge himself in an ill-natured sneer on Mr. Wilkes's non-proficiency in theology! In one word, a strange rebuke from a man who, from one end of his pamphlet to the other, hath made the poor public orator so sore, that it may be questioned whether all the plaister in Oxford will skin over the scratches in seven years! But to be serious. The Vindicator is "only concerned "for the reputation of those who call themselves members of the "church of England, and desert her principles." I can assure him, the author of *The Confessional*, SCOFFER as he is, is concerned for something more, even for the reputation of the church herself, who plants these principles in the manner of a fence, "far too low to "keep out men of little or no principle, and sometimes too high for "men of real integrity to surmount," and thereby lays a temptation in the way of frail mortals of a certain class, to call themselves by her name, even while they desert her principles. One cannot help, indeed, being a little concerned for the men themselves (considering the hard necessity under which some of them find themselves) provided they make no very high pretensions to real integrity. When they do, and still continue deserters, a little scoffing is but a very gentle corrective. It may now and then take off a little skin, but it breaks no bones, it stops no breath; and if I am not mistaken, the censure of the Vindicator upon the planters of the fence just mentioned, will end in something infinitely more severe than scoffing. He tells us, p. 24, that the late Dr. Heylin (not the profligate Peter of the Laudæan age) is reported to have said, that "our reformers, who drew up such articles, *deserved to be hanged*." For my part, I am inclined to shew more mercy to our reformers, on account of many good things (exclusive of the articles) for which we are beholden to them. But I will be free to declare (and I make myself sure of being supported by the Vindicator's suffrage) that they "who "are for keeping open a door of ready admission to the abandoned, "and for shutting it upon men of real integrity," deserve to be hanged as high as the monument. And if this description should happen hereafter to be applied to the strenuous endeavours of the NOWELLISTS to keep up the fence of subscription; I dare say they will think themselves tenderly dealt with by the stripes of a little raillery on their conduct, in comparison of the conclusions which would reduce them to their neck-verse.

been espoused and pursued by their successors, in such sort, as to give more than a suspicion to some competent observers, that the church of England has been, and still is, though by degrees imperceptible to vulgar eyes, edging back once more towards popery.

" From the beginning of Charles I," says a sensible writer, " the pulpit took up a new " scheme, under the particular influence of " archbishop Laud. A scheme so entirely " new, that it was remonstrated against by " the parliament, as contrary to the articles, " and as what had a tendency to carry back " the nation into popery. *Perhaps, in some " measure, the apprehension of that parlia- " ment has been verified.* And from Charles " I. the new system hath chiefly prevailed, " down to the present period."* And, he might have added, " has been attended with " suitable effects."

If any one is desirous to see these apprehensions verified in particular instances, he may satisfy himself by consulting a pamphlet written by Dr. Du Moulin, some time history-professor in Oxford, printed in 1680,† which might be continued even to the present times, by the addition of examples still more striking than those of Du Moulin. The effect of which cannot be more convincingly proved, than by the great and alarming increase of popery in these kingdoms.‡

* Seagrave's True Proteſtant, p. 25.

† Intituled, *A ſhort and true account of the ſeveral advances the church of England hath made towards Rome.*

‡ See Dr. Stebbing's two little Tracts againſt popery, juſt pub-

The clergy of the church of England, it is true, have constantly disclaimed all connection with popery, or any design or disposition to promote that cause; which however is but an equivocal proof of a different spirit, and none at all that the tendency of their doctrines doth not bend towards popery.

When Jansenius published his system of grace, the good catholics taxed him with Calvinism. In vain did he endeavour to wipe off the aspersion. In vain did he write most bitterly against the protestants, in order to convince his incredulous brethren that he was not to be ranked among them. They returned again and again to the charge, and confirmed it, by shewing both the origin and tendency of his doctrines.*

The papists have common sense; and can see, no doubt, into the tendency of certain

lished. Whoever will be at the pains to consult this doctor's Polemical Tracts, and compare some passages in them (particularly in his Rational Inquiry, &c.) with some things in these little books, will see how he is obliged to lower his high church notions, to battle the papists; conscious, as it should seem, that his old principles had too much of a popish complexion.

* Quin in Galliis, quod beneficii loco sine dubio numeravit, magnam adeptus erat librorum calvinianorum copiam, quorum de fontibus hausit Augustini interpretationem, & invenerat homines á calvini disciplinâ non alienos, quibus liberiores de gratia sermones contulerat. Bayle's Dict. Jansenius, remark [F] cited from a book, intituled, Jansenius Suspectus, ascribed to the Jesuit Vavassor. The Jansenists, as may well be supposed, endeavoured, by all possible means, to rid themselves of this imputation. Mr. Bayle reports their success in the following words: "The Jansenists have maintained, "with equal heat, that, upon the point of liberty, they were not "calvinists. There are no artifices, or ill-grounded distinctions, but "what have been made use of to colour that pretence; and all this, "to avoid the dangerous consequences they foresaw would follow "their confessing any conformity with the calvinists." Ibid. Rem. [H.]

opinions, as well as Luther or Calvin did. And, whatever Jansenius could say for himself, the orthodox catholics saw, that, in the next generation, his followers, if they adhered to his opinions, would, very probably, leave their church; to prevent which, they procured the condemnation of his book, anno 1653.

The same suspicions procured the famous Bull Unigenitus, condemning the doctrines of Father Pasquier Quesnel, in the year 1713. Was this man so treated, because his conduct gave any offence as a papist? No; he died not only a sincere, but a bigoted son of that church; and, what is more, he so died in a protestant country, where he was under no necessity to dissemble; namely, at Amsterdam, December 2, 1719.—"He received extreme "unction, extended on a matt; he took the "holy *viaticum* on his knees;—he made his "profession of faith in the presence of two "apostolical prothonotaries,—importing, that "he believed all the truths, which Jesus Christ "taught his church; that he will die within "the bosom of it; and condemns all errors "which it condemns, or shall condemn. He "acknowledges the pope the first vicar of Je-"sus Christ, and the apostolic see the centre "of union.—But, withal, still believes he had "taught nothing in the obnoxious book, "which is not conformable to the faith of the "church."—And had his superiors thought so too, they had all the reason in the world to be satisfied with his edifying catholicism.*

* *Vid. Critique de l'apologie d'Erasme, de M l'abbé de Marsolier*, p. 13.

But go to the propositions, extracted from his book for condemnation; and you will presently see, that was not only of Calvin's mind in the articles of *Grace, Justification, &c.* but had built upon those principles some other doctrines, which are in little agreement with the faith he professes to repose in the church.*

I forbear to mention the more recent disturbances that have been in France, about the same doctrines; concerning which it has been imagined, that if the church and state could not find the means, by their united powers, totally to suppress the Jansenists, Jansenism would infallibly produce a reformation of religion, upon the true protestant plan.

The result is, that our first reformers framed and placed the xxxix articles, and more particularly those called Calvinistical, as the surest and strongest barriers to keep out popery. A protestant divine may possibly have his objections against the plain sense of those articles; but, in this case, he ought not to subscribe them at all. For if he can bring himself to assent to, and subscribe them in a catholic sense, I would desire to know what security the church has, that he does not put the like catholic sense (with which he may be furnished by the Jesuits) upon those articles which concern transubstantiation and purgatory?

In answer to this, we are told, that these doctrinal articles, concerning grace, free-will, predestination, &c. are susceptible of an Arminian sense; and this is the———

* These propositions may be seen in *The present state of the Republic of Letters, for July*, 1733. From whence also the account above of Quesnel's death is taken.

Third inducement our modern subscribers have to plead.

Archbishop Laud, as we have seen, was the earliest patron of this device. However, I cannot think the practice would have thriven as it has done, if he had been its only patron. His name is in no great veneration with the rational part of the English clergy, particularly with those who are the most strenuous advocates for a latitude in subscribing: and, by an unaccountable reverse of things, the men who are enamoured the most of Laud's political and hierarchical principles, have contended with the utmost zeal against putting a double sense upon any of the articles.

It seems to me, indeed, that these two parties have not perfectly understood each other concerning this *double sense*, of which one affirms, and the other denies, the articles to be capable. Let us consider this matter, with respect still to the doctrinal articles called calvinistical.

When the controversy between the calvinists and arminians first appeared in form, the latter were told in plain terms, "that whoso-"ever opposed the absolute decree of predes-"tination, crossed the doctrine of the church "of England; and that the english universities "and bishops had always condemned them as "contradictory to absolute decrees."*

This has been often denied, and as often reasserted. Dr. Waterland, in his Supplement, labours strenuously, with old Heylin's tools, to

* Bishop Davenant: Animadversions on a treatise, intituled, *God's Love to Mankind*, p. 6.

prove that our articles in particular are anti-calvinistical.

But the author of the *Reply to the Supplement*, who is said to be Dr. Sykes hath so effectually confuted him, that it is not likely that pretence will ever be revived any more.

After Dr. Sykes hath proved his point against the *Supplement*, he subjoins the following ingenuous acknowledgement:

"But, without entering into any farther "historical disquisitions, I think it is evident "that the articles were made by men who were "thoroughly in St. Austin's scheme, and "that they meant to express that. They chose "to express themselves with great moderation "and temper; in consequence of which, men "of different opinions have thought themselves "at liberty to take a latitude, in order to come "in. Accordingly men of very different opi-"nions can, and do subscribe; and, since the "words are capable of such meaning, an ar-"minian honestly subscribes to the general "words; whereas were the sense of the com-"piler, and not his words only, the standard, "none but a calvinist could honestly sub-"scribe."*

I think it very evident, that Dr. Waterland and his antagonist meant, by *a latitude in subscribing*, two very different things. Dr. Waterland could never mean to exclude a calvinist from subscribing the seventeenth article; since the utmost he ventures to say of it is, "I "am rather of opinion, that the article leans to

* Reply, p. 39.

"the anti-calvinian persuasion." Dr. Waterland therefore, was of opinion, that the compilers left room both for the calvinist and the arminian to subscribe: and that both the calvinist and arminian may honestly subscribe, that is, consistently with the sense or the intention of the compiler.

On the contrary, Dr. Sykes is of opinion, that, with respect to the sense or intention of the compilers, the arminian sense is quite excluded; and accordingly derives the allowance of a latitude to the arminian, from the sense the general words will receive. And this, as I take it, is the latitude, or the *literal* and *grammatical* sense, for which bishop Burnet, Dr. Clarke, and perhaps the Doctors Nicholls and Bennet, contend.

I apprehend, that, if Dr. W's. hypothesis could be supported by proper evidence, every one will allow, that he exhibits much the honester scheme of latitude, of the two: but that is impossible; and Dr. Sykes's premises, that the calvinistical sense of the articles, exclusive of the arminian sense, was the sense of the compilers, stand indisputable.

But how could honest men ever bring themselves to think, they were at liberty to put a sense upon a writing, which the authors of that writing never intended? The writing in question, is a public writing; and no public authority is pretended for taking this liberty, but his Majesty's *Declaration*, which, whatever weight it might have had in its day, has evidently been of no force for above an hundred years past.

What makes it more surprizing that any the least stress should be laid upon this Declaration, is, that Dr. Sykes allows, that "supposing "the legislature itself, considered as such, "were (without a new declaratory law) to in- "termeddle in determining what is the proper "sense and extent of the articles, and what "shall be judged agreeable or disagreeable to "them,—this would be determining what they "had no right to determine."*

Is this Declaration then a new declaratory law? Nobody, I suppose, will pretend that. So far, therefore, as it intermeddles in determining what is the proper sense and extent of the articles, and what shall be judged agreeable or disagreeable to them, it pretends to determine what it hath no right to determine. It would have been very strange doctrine in the ears of Dr. Sykes himself, to say, that king Charles, in the single capacity of a monarch, had a right to do that, which the legislature in its collective capacity had no right to do.

When Dr. Sykes first undertook to oppose Dr. Waterland in this matter, it is probable he did not foresee, that he should be obliged to own, that the articles in question were evidently calvinistical. His arguments in his first pamphlet, go upon the supposition, that the sense of the articles is not fixed; which is only saying in other words, that the meaning of the compilers is not known. And to keep matters under such uncertainty, for purposes now very well understood, seems to have been the view of the king's Declaration.

* Reply, p. 15.

But the Doctor, by acknowledging the sense of certain articles to be originally calvinistical, has, with respect to those articles, deprived himself of the privilege he might otherwise pretend to derive from the Declaration; namely, of subscribing them in an arminian sense. The Declaration supposes the articles to be drawn up in general words, which favour no side. Allow that the articles were originally drawn up to favour one side, and what use can you make of the Declaration? or what refuge for various senses can you find under that?

For my own part, I cannot but think that an honest man must have some struggles with himself, before he can bring himself to give a sense to words, which *he knows* they were never meant to bear; and especially when those words are the words of a covenant, importing some kind of security given to the public, by assenting to them.

And yet certain it is, that some very good and worthy men, by virtue of a certain sort of casuistry, have reconciled themselves to this practice, to avoid some present inconveniences grievous to flesh and blood. And, having met with a remarkable instance of this in the course of my inquiries into this subject, I shall now lay it before the reader, the rather as, from a certain resemblance in the features, I am persuaded that our modern casuistry is, in a great measure, derived from this great exemplar.

It has been already observed, that some of the ancient puritans in king James's time refused to subscribe the articles, upon the supposition that the purpose, if not the doctrine of the church, was changed from what it had

been. When arminianism came to be more openly avowed by the bishops, and supported by king Charles's injunctions, &c. the same people were in still greater distress, not knowing what use might be made of their subscriptions, as they were taken in the canonical form, which admitted of no reserve or limitation whatever; and it does not appear, that the subtleties of our modern casuistry had then been found out.

But these same puritans having, by opposing these attempts of their adversaries with spirit and vigour, got the upper hand, it came to their turn to impose terms and conditions upon those who had formerly put the like hardships upon them.

This occasioned a great demand among the royalists for casuistical divinity, and salvoes of several kinds; in which mystical science, the most eminent adept was Dr. Robert Sanderson, afterwards bishop of Lincoln; a venerable character, which has descended, with much estimation, even to the present times; insomuch that, I suppose, few people, who should fall into any of those dilemmas from which he provided ways to escape, would scruple to abide by his judgment.

Among other cases of different kinds, a question was put to this able casuist, whether a royalist, who had taken the oath of allegiance to king Charles I. might conscientiously take the Engagement, injoined by the parliament in the year 1650, which ran in these words:——

I A. B. *do promise, that I will be true and faithful to the commonwealth of England, as it is now established without king or lords.*

But, before we take a view of this learned Doctor's sentiments on this subject, it will be proper to look back a few years, to another transaction, wherein this same Dr. Sanderson had a principal share.

In the year 1646-47, the parliament determined to visit the university of Oxford, by a committee of their own house. "But before "the visitation could take place, the vice-"chancellor, Dr. Fell, summoned the convo-"cation [June 1] wherein it was agreed, not "to submit to the parliament-visitors. A pa-"per of reasons against the *covenant*, the *ne-"gative-oath*, and the *directory*, drawn up "chiefly by Dr. Sanderson, was also consented "to, and ordered to be published to the world, "both in latin and english,—under the title "of *Reasons of the present Judgment of the "University of* OXFORD, &c."*

Under the head, *Of the Salvoes for taking the covenant*, Dr. Sanderson expresses the sense of the university, and consequently his own, in the following terms:

(1.) "It has been said, that we take it [the "covenant] in our own sense. But this we "apprehend, contrary to the nature and end "of an oath; contrary to the end of speech; "contrary to the design of the covenant; "and contrary to the solemn confession at the "conclusion of it, (viz.) that we shall take it "with a true intention to perform the same;

* Neale's Hist. of the Puritans, 8vo. vol. III. p. 434.

" as we shall answer it to the searcher of all " hearts at the great day.

" Besides, this would be jesuitical; it would " be taking the name of God in vain; and it " would strengthen the objection of those who " say, there is no faith to be given to protes- " tants.

(2.) " It has been said, we may take the " covenant with these salvoes expressed, *so* " *far as lawfully I may :—as it is agreeable* " *to the word of God, and the laws of the land;* " *saving all oaths by me formerly taken,* &c. " which is no better than vile hypocrisy; for, " by the same rule, one may subscribe to the " council of Trent, or the Turkish Alcoran."

Thus judged the learned Dr. Sanderson in the year 1647. There are some other qualifying particulars mentioned in this rescript, which may be seen at full length in Neale's History. These are sufficient for my present purpose; and very naturally suggest the following remarks.

Either the parliament visitors would have allowed of these salvoes, or they would not. If they would not, for what purpose are they brought in here, unless it be to condemn some of the royal party who had made use of them? And so far they are right, for this was no better than downright prevarication.

If the parliament would have allowed of, or connived at, these salvoes (as I think the Oxford-men took it for granted;) we see here was the *mens imponentis*, the tacit consent, at least, of the imposers, on the side of those who took it with these reserves. And yet, we find, these

casuists were not for making use of this indulgence, because contrary to the plain and express words, as well as the design, of the covenant. They accordingly condemn the practice as *jesuitical*, full of vile hypocrisy, perverting the nature and end of an oath, abusing the end of speech, and highly scandalous to the protestant name.

Let us now see how the same Dr. Sanderson satisfied his querist, concerning taking the *Engagement*, in the year 1650, and how consistent he was with his own judgment four years before.

He begins with laying it down as a fact, "that all expressions by words are subject to "such ambiguities, that scarce any thing can "be said or expressed in any words, how cau-"telously soever chosen, which will not render "the whole subject capable of more construc-"tions than one."*

According to this maxim, the covenant, which was ten times as long, at least, as the engagement, must be capable of still more constructions. And yet Dr. Sanderson could see plainly and clearly into the design of *that*.—He lays it down,

2. "Where one construction binds to more, "another to less, the true sense is to be fixed

* *Nine Cases of Conscience*, p. 94. Archbishop Tillotson hath said much the same thing. "It is plainly impossible, that any thing "shou'd be delivered in such clear and certain words, as to be ab-"solutely incapable of any other sense."—But then he adds,—"And yet, notwithstanding this, the meaning of them may be so "plain, that any unprejudiced and reasonable man may certainly "understand them." Preface to his Sermons, octavo, 1743, p. 15. Which seems to have been sufficiently the case with the *Engagement*, to have excused Dr. Sanderson the pains he hath taken with it.

" by the intention of the imposer. For that " all promises and assurances, wherein faith is " required to be given to another, ought to be " understood *ad mentem imponentis*, according " to the mind and meaning of him to whom " the faith is given, so far forth as the meaning " may reasonably appear."

Now surely no man's mind and meaning may *more* reasonably, or *so* reasonably, appear in any other way, as by his own personal positive explanation of it. The short and true answer then to the question had been, "If you " are under any uncertainty concerning the " meaning of any expressions in the engage- " ment, consult the imposers, and govern " yourself by their interpretation." Cases might have happened, where the intention of the imposer was doubtful, and where the imposer himself could not be come at. In the present instance the imposers were living, easily found, and capable of explaining their own meaning with the greatest precision.

But probably these imposers would not have answered the querist's end so well as Dr. Sanderson; who goes on,

3. ——— " *Reasonably appear*, I mean, by " the nature of the matter about which it is " conversant, and such signification of the " words wherein it is expressed, as, according " to the ordinary use of speech among men, " agreeth best thereto."

But if the mind and meaning of the imposer *reasonably* appears by the nature of the subject, and by the ordinary signification of the words wherein it is expressed, then it *sufficiently* appears. There is no pretence left, in such a

case, for doubt or ambiguity. The question does not concern such a case; but those cases only, wherein the mind of the imposer does *not* sufficiently appear: and here, conscience and good faith require, that you should consult the imposer himself, if he may be found. — "You are mistaken," says the casuist, "for,

4. "If the intention of the imposer be not "so fully declared by the words and the na- "ture of the business, but that the same words "may, in fair construction, be still capable of "a double meaning, so as, taken in one sense, "they shall bind to more, and in another to "less, I conceive it is not necessary, nor al- "ways expedient (but rather, for the most "part, otherwise) for the promiser, before he "give [his] faith, to demand of the imposer, "whether of the two is his meaning? But he "may, by the rule of prudence, and that (for "aught I see) without the violation of any "law of his conscience, make his just advan- "tage of that ambiguity, and take it in same "sense which shall bind him to the less."

This looks extremely like a contradiction to what went before, namely, that "all promises, "&c. ought to be understood *ad mentem im- "ponentis.*" But dextrous casuists can extricate themselves out of much more considerable difficulties. Observe how nimbly the doctor comes off here.

"Since the faith to be given, is intended "to the behoof of him to whom it is given, it "concerneth him to take care, that his mea- "ning be expressed in such words as will suf- "ficiently manifest the same to the understan- "ding of a reasonable man: which if he

" neglect to do, no law of equity or prudence " bindeth the promiser, by an over-scrupulous " diligence, to make it out, whereby to lay a " greater obligation upon himself than he need " to do."

But here the doctor is met full in the face by another of his principles, which is, that " scarce " any thing can be expressed in any words, " *how cautelously soever chosen*, which will " not admit of more constructions than one." ——So that, after the utmost *care* and *caution* the imposer could possibly take, his meaning might be dubious to a reasonable man, and much more to a prejudiced querist, and a willing casuist, as will more particularly appear, now that we attend the learned doctor in the application of his principles to the *engagement*.

" In which, our casuist says, there are sun- " dry ambiguities.

1. " The words *true* and *faithful* may in- " tend, either fidelity and allegiance to be per- " formed to the powers in possession, as their " right and due; or such a kind of fidelity as " captives taken in war promise to their ene- " mies, &c.

2. " By the word *commonwealth*, may either " be meant—the *prevalent party*—now pos- " sessed of, and exercising, supreme power in " this kingdom; or else the *whole entire body* " *of the english nation*, as it is a civil society, " or state within itself, distinguished from all " other foreign states.

3. " The word *established*, may signify the " establishment of the present form of govern- " ment, either *de jure*, or *de facto*, &c."

Out of these distinctions he works the two following senses of the engagement:

"I acknowledge the sovereign power in this "nation, whereunto I owe allegiance and sub- "jection, to be rightly stated in the house of "commons, wherein neither king nor lords "(as such) have, or henceforth ought to have, "any share. And I promise, that I will per- "form all allegiance and subjection thereunto; "and maintain the same with my fortunes and "my life, to the utmost of my power."

They who know the history of those times, and the occasion of the *engagement*, can entertain no doubt but this was the natural meaning of this security, and will therein see a manifest reason why Dr. Sanderson would not send his querist to the imposers for a resolution of his doubts; especially as, by his quibbles, he could, for his satisfaction, squeeze the following sense out of the same words of the engagement:

"Whereas, for the present, the supreme "power in England is actually possessed and "exercised by the house of commons, without "either king or lords; I promise that, *so long* "*as I live under that power and protection*, I "will not contrive or attempt any act of hos- "tility against them; but, living quietly and "peaceably under them, will endeavour my- "self, *faithfully*, *in my place and calling*, to do "*what every good member of a commonwealth* "*ought to do, for the safety of my country, and* "*preservation of civil society therein.*"

After which follow some arguments tending to prove, that this latter was more probably the sense of the imposers, than the other; which

can be looked upon in no better light than of an attempt to insult the common sense of all mankind.

In the beginning of this case of conscience, the learned doctor offers something, by way of shewing, that the *solemn league and covenant*, being expressly contrary to the oaths of allegiance, was not lawfully to be taken by any man who had taken such oaths, or was persuaded such allegiance was due: which he seems to have mentioned, lest his Oxford divinity upon the *covenant* should be applied to the case of the *engagement*. The difference between the two cases, however, consists singly and solely in these probabilities he mentions, that the framers of the *engagement* intended this lower sense, which no doubt he thought to be consistent with the querist's allegiance to king Charles. And indeed not without reason; since, without all dispute, both the casuists and the querists principles led them to believe, that every good member of the commonwealth ought, in his place and calling, to contribute all in his power to the restoration of king Charles, and that for the safety of his country, and the preservation of civil society therein. No one can doubt of this, who knows that it was this same Dr. Sanderson who declared, it was not lawful to resist the prince upon the throne, even to save all the souls in the whole world.

But did Dr. Sanderson really think that the powers then in being were such fools and triflers, as probably to intend to put no other but his lower sense upon the engagement, or indeed to allow of that sense at all?—It is too evident for his credit, from his own words in this very

tract, that he did not. For he intreats his correspondent to take care that no copies of his paper should get abroad; "lest the potent party," says he, "in consideration of some "things therein hinted, might think the words "of the engagement too light, and might "thence take occasion to lay some heavier ob- "ligation upon the royalists, in words that "would oblige to more."

Could the casuist have entertained any suspicions of this sort, had he really and sincerely thought the lower construction was the sense intended by the potent party?

He concludes his case thus: "If any man, "out of these considerations, rather than suf- "fer extreme prejudice to his person, estate, "or necessary relations, shall subscribe the "engagement [in that sense which binds to "less,] since his own heart condemneth him "not" [and that it might not, he, good man, had taken no ordinary pains,] "neither do I."

Who shall now be saucy enough to say, there is no faith to be given to protestants?

"Many, without doubt," says Dr. Waterland, "have been guilty of prevaricating with "state oaths; but nobody has yet been found "sanguine enough to undertake the defence "of it in print."*

This case of conscience was in print before Dr. Waterland was born; and it would hardly be doing justice to his great learning to suppose he had never seen it. Shall we say it did not come up to his idea of defending prevarication? or might his veneration for bishop

* Case of Arian Subscription, p. 4.

Sanderson make him tender of pronouncing upon it? "If, instead of excusing a fraudulent subscription, on the foot of human infirmity," says the doctor, "endeavours be "used to defend it upon principle, and to "support it by rules of art, it concerns every "honest man to look about him." Substitute in this sentence, *state oaths* in the place of *church-subscriptions*, and you have a true character of Sanderson's performance.

I cannot avoid remarking in this place the similarity of the two cases for which *his Majesty's Declaration* and this *Dispensation of Sanderson's* were respectively contrived.

James I. (or, if you will, Charles I.) wanted the assistance of the high-flying arminians. But that he could not have, till, by subscription, they had qualified themselves for preferments in the church: and subscribe they decently could not, till the articles were some way accommodated to their notions. This was effected by the *Declaration*.

Charles II. then in exile, wanted the aid of the cavaliers and presbyterians, and this he could not have, till they had equipped themselves for posts of trust and power; and to these they must pass through the *engagement*, which, in its obvious meaning, would not go down with numbers of them.* Dr. Sanderson

* The presbyterians, if we may believe Dr. Calamy, were more scrupulous about taking the *engagement*, than the episcopalians. The famous Mr. Richard Vines was, for refusing that security, put out of the headship of Pembroke hall, in Cambridge, as was Dr. Rainbow at another college in the same university. Dr. Reynolds forfeited the deanry of Christ-church, Oxford, on the same account, *Abridgement*, 62, 63. Mr. Baxter, we are told, *ib.* p. 104. dis-

himself insinuates, that this temporizing was neither unknown to, nor disapproved by the king: and, to encourage it the more, tells the querist, that, "whensoever the present "force was so removed from the taker [of the "*engagement*], or he from under it, as that "he should have power to act according to his "allegiance, the obligation would of itself "determine and expire." A sort of doctrine that seems rather to have been born and bred at Liege or St. Omer's than at Oxford.

One word with the Doctors Sykes and Sanderson together, and I have done.

Dr. Sykes lays great stress upon this circumstance, viz. that the church of England, being a protestant church, cannot consistently obtrude her own interpretations of scripture upon her members, so as to supersede or over-rule the right of private judgment, or the liberty every one has to interpret for himself. "Whatever authority," says he, "the church may "claim, [he should have added, or exercise]

suaded men from taking it, wrote against the taking of it, and declared to those who were for putting quibbling constructions on it, that "the subject's allegiance, or fidelity to his rulers, could not be acknowledged and given in plainer words." Bishop Sanderson hints at these scruples of the presbyterians, in this very tract, p. 94. concluding however, that "for his own part, when we speak of learning and conscience, he holds most of the presbyterians to be very "little considerable." What would not a man say, to serve a cause, bad or good, that could say this? But let us not forget the excellent Dr. Isaac Barrow on this occasion, who, "when the engagement was imposed, subscribed it; but, upon second thoughts, "repenting of what he had done, he applied himself to the commissioners, declared his dissatisfaction, and prevailed to have his "name razed out of the list." *Biogr. Brit.* in article BARROW, *Text.*——Most people will think Barrow as good a casuist as Sanderson.

" it must still be subservient to the right of " interpreting scripture for one's self; or else " the exhorting men to study the scriptures, " is just such a banter and ridicule, as it would " be seriously to command one to see clearly " and distinctly any object, and at the same " time to put false spectacles before our eyes."*

Let us put this into political language. " We must still preserve our allegiance to the " scriptures, notwithstanding our submitting " to the claims of the church *de facto*, which " seem to be inconsistent with it. The church " herself acknowledges the right of the scrip- " tures *de jure ;* and therefore, if she chal- " lenges such an allegiance from us *de facto*, " as contravenes our allegiance to the scrip- " tures"—what then ?—The premises certainly lead us to conclude—" We must not com- " ply with her, notwithstanding her pre- " tences of acknowledging the sovereign au- " thority of the scriptures."—Instead of that, Dr. Sykes only concludes—" She must then " be inconsistent with herself."—As if it was impossible for the church of England to be inconsistent with herself! The question is, whether the church of England does not, by her authority *de facto*, supersede the allegiance which she professes to be due to the scriptures *de jure*, by requiring subscriptions to her own interpretations ? And, if she does, what ought a conscientious man to do in such a case ?—As little as I am in love with bishop Sanderson's Theology, I will venture to leave this point to

* Reply to Waterland's Supplement, p. 26.

his decision, who, in a case exactly parallel, determines as follows:

"The taking of the late *Solemn League and Covenant* by any subject of England (notwithstanding the protestation in the preface, that therein *he had the honour of the king before his eyes;* and that express clause in one of the articles of it, wherein he swore *the preservation of the king's person and honour*) was an act as clear contrary to *the oath of allegiance*, and the natural duty of every subject of England, as the *assisting of the king to the utmost of one's power* (which is a branch of the oaths,) and *the assisting against any person whatsoever, with his utmost power, those who were actually in arms against the king* (which was the very end for which that covenant was set on foot,) are contrary the one to the other."*

The doctor has expressed himself awkwardly enough; but his sentiment is plain, and his inference unavoidable. "Therefore, no subject of England, who desired to preserve his allegiance to king Charles I. could conscientiously take the *Solemn League and Covenant*, notwithstanding the saving clauses therein expressed." Let the reader make the application.

I am heartily sorry that I cannot derive the practice of our subscribing the xxxix articles with a latitude from a more respectable origin than these foregoing precedents. Every man, however, has the same right that I have of judging for himself: and I pretend to no

* Nine Cases, p. 92, 93.

more, in this collection of facts, than to assist those to whom the subject is of importance, to form their own sentiments upon it with precision and impartiality. There will still be numbers among us, who will continue to subscribe, and continue likewise to *care for none of these things.* Such as these, perhaps, care not for matters of more consequence; which, indeed, I should apprehend to be the case with the most of those who can bring themselves to give a security of this kind to the church and to the public, without a previous examination, to what the nature and circumstances of so solemn an act do in reality amount.

CHAP. VIII.

Concerning the Conclusions that arise from the foregoing Disquisitions.

IT is now time to sum up the account, and to consider to what it amounts. A detail of facts, exhibiting all this contrariety of sentiments, all this confusion and uncertainty with respect to the case of subscribing our established forms, would be of little use, if some consequences might not be drawn from it, tending to lead us out of the labyrinth, and suggesting some means of putting the matter upon a more edifying footing.

I have not willingly and knowingly misrepresented any thing, in stating the several cases that have come under consideration. I have cited authorities fairly and candidly, and have not, to my knowledge, suppressed any thing that might shew them to the best advantage. But if any one should think there is a partial bias in the reflections I have occasionally made upon particular passages, I will readily give them up, upon competent proof of such obliquity, and abide by the conclusions which any man of common honesty and common sense shall think fit to draw from this perplexity and contradiction among so many learned writers, who, on other occasions, acquit themselves with sufficient clearness and consistency.

Such a one, I presume, will make no difficulty to acknowledge, that, in this matter of

subscription at least, a reformation is devoutly to be wished. The bishops Burnet and Clayton, the doctors Clarke, Sykes, and others, confess it, and call for it. And though such writers as bishop Conybeare, and the doctors Nicholls, Bennet, Waterland, Stebbing, &c. the heroes of our fifth chapter, neither allow the expedience of such reformation, nor would have endured any proposals of that kind without a strenuous opposition, yet their own writings on the subject, when compared together, are more than a thousand advocates for it; if it were only for the sake of taking away the offence and scandal arising from the supposed occasion the church of England has to employ such a sett of party-coloured casuists.

Indeed an unlimited latitude of interpretation, allowing every subscriber of the articles to abound in his own sense, tends, in a great measure, to supersede the necessity for a revision of our present system, as supposing that men of different opinions may very well acquiesce in it as it is. This is what bishop Burnet, Dr. Clarke, and the writers of that complexion, contend for, and, in so doing, furnish their adversaries with an answer out of their own mouths, whenever they plead for a reformation; a term which supposes and implies, that things are in such a state, as honest and conscientious subscribers cannot acquiesce in.

Of late, indeed, the necessity for a reformation in this, as well as in other articles of our ecclesiastical establishment, has been acknowledged by unprejudiced and conscientious men

of different persuasions: and even they who dread it on private and personal considerations, when they think fit to appear in opposition to any proposals tending that way, betray the most manifest tokens of conviction, that a reformation would be a right measure in itself; and therefore set themselves to shew, that a reformation is rather impracticable, than unnecessary; of which I shall presently give some remarkable instances.

Let us then proceed to consider the force of the arguments against a reformation, drawn from the impracticability of it; taking along with us the concession, that a reformation is expedient and desirable.

The question, with which this inquiry naturally opens, is, by whom should a reformation in our ecclesiastical affairs be first attempted?

And here I take it for granted, that all sides will be unanimous in their answer; namely, by the bishops, and other pious and learned divines, who, by the course of their education and studies, and their intercourse with clergymen of all capacities and dispositions, may well be supposed to have the clearest conception both of what is amiss, and of the most effectual methods to bring things into order.

Here the only difficulty to be apprehended is, that, the bishops having no authority to undertake any thing of this sort of themselves, recourse must be had to the civil powers, first for leave or license to make a proper examination into the particulars that may want to be reformed, and afterwards to give a legal sanction to such alterations as may be found neces-

sary: and there may perhaps be some doubt made, whether my lords the bishops would succeed in applying to the crown for the powers necessary for such an undertaking, or to the legislature for their authorising such a reform, as their lordships and their assistants might think requisite.

Now for any such objection as this I apprehend there is not the least room, till such application has actually been made and rejected. Have our bishops and great churchmen ever made the trial? Have they been disappointed in the event of it?

I will venture to answer both these questions in the negative: and will support my opinion by a witness worthy of all credit:

"I have been credibly informed, says this "deponent, his majesty* has sometimes said "to a late great prelate, when paying his du- "ty at court,—*Is there any thing, my lord, "you would have me do for the church of Eng- "land? If there is, let me know it.* And "he, continues this writer, who of his own "motion will say this, cannot receive other- "wise than graciously any petition for leave "and opportunity to his clergy, to consult "together for its good, [Qu. *whose good, or "the good of what, the church or the* clergy?] "if it be made with decency and propriety."†

* King GEORGE II.

† Free and impartial Considerations on the *Free and Candid Disquisitions, &c.* p. 56. printed for Baldwin, 1751. The author of which is now known to be the Reverend J. WHITE, B. D.

Upon this fact I rest the evidence, that no application has been made to the throne, on the behalf of reforming the church of England; and that, if our bishops had applied, their petition would not have been rejected.

The patrons of the present ecclesiastical system, therefore, put the *impracticability* of a reformation upon the people, with whom they can use more freedom. They tell us, the times are not ripe for reformation. The english of which is, that the temper and manners of our people are not in a condition to be reformed.

Hear how the same *free* and *impartial considerer* I have just now quoted, sets forth the *unripeness* of the present times in this respect:

"The gross body of the people are weak, "ignorant, injudicious, capricious, factious, "head-strong, self-willed, and self-sufficient, "and never less disposed than at this time to "acquiesce in the wisdom, and submit themselves to the decisions, of their superiors, "nor ever more impatient to be driven from "their old habits, and put out of their way "in the offices, or any other matters of religion; especially those which they themselves are to practise, and have a personal "concern in. *This is now grown to be the "general temper of the people.* I don't call "it their bigotry. No; 'tis a spirit of mutiny and independence, and this, I think you "must allow, is still increasing, as much as "you or I can pretend the other is decreasing "among us."*

I would not have cited this passage in proof

* Free and Impartial Considerations, &c. p. 7, 8.

of what I have advanced, but that the author of it gives broad hints that he wrote *permissu superiorum.* "Some things he omitted by the "advice of those whose judgment he greatly "reverences, and cannot allow himself *in any* "*thing* to differ from." These must be his ecclesiastical superiors; since, in some or other of his books, he hath *allowed himself to differ* from men of almost all other denominations, who pretend to be judges of such things. He speaks as if he had conferred upon the subject of alterations "with a person in high sta-"tion," p. 63. In another place he says, "nay, I am satisfied we shall not stand with "them [the dissenters] for half a dozen things "of the like nature [as the cross in baptism] "upon so good and valuable a consideration, "as their coming in and embracing the com-"munion of the church."* No man, one would think, at least no such man as Mr. White, would venture to answer for my lords the bishops, in so public a manner, and upon so nice a point, without some assurance that they would not disown him, should the matter be brought to a trial. I conclude, therefore, that this paragraph is agreeable to the sentiments of those great churchmen who supervised Mr. White's pamphlet; otherwise it certainly should have been omitted, as some other things were, by the advice of his friend or friends in high station. But let us now proceed to consider the case it exhibits.

We have here the general temper of the gross body of a christian people described in terms,

* Free and Impartial Conſiderations, &c. p. 7, 8.

which, with the addition of one or two epithets, would perfectly characterize the inhabitants of a *Pandæmoninum*. Bigotry, or a blind attachment to religious prejudices, would have afforded some excuse for these wretches. Misled by the superstition of ignorant parents, or imposed upon by the wiles of crafty teachers, the fault might not have been wholly their own, that they were not more tractable and submissive to proper authority: but this would have thrown part of their guilt where Mr. White did not want to have it thrown. They are therefore deprived of the benefit of this plea, and their depravity ascribed to a factious headstrong spirit of their own; an inborn malignity of heart, one would think, near akin to that of the *spirits who kept not their first estate*, and equally incurable.

And yet, when this free and impartial considerer comes to be cross-examined upon this accusation, we shall find such evident tokens of disingenuity, as discover that his testimony was not founded merely on the love of truth. For, in the first place, who can these superiors be, in whose wisdom this mutinous people refuse to acquiesce, and to whose judgment they will not submit? Not their ecclesiastical superiors, we may be sure; since Mr. White has told us in this same pamphlet, that this very people, capricious, factious, headstrong, &c. as he has represented them, *have some respect for their* spiritual *guides and governors;* and sense enough, with all their weakness, ignorance, and want of judgment, "to perceive "that those who are led by their office to think

" continually on those things which concern " religion, are more likely to judge rightly " of them, than any lay-assembly whatever." P. 2.

The result is then, that this spirit of mutiny would only be exerted against the lay-superiors of this headstrong people. But how does this appear, or what foundation in the present case is there for any such apprehension? When have our lay-superiors attempted, within Mr. White's memory, " to drive us from our old " habits, or put us out of our way, in the " offices, or any other matters of religion, " especially those which we ourselves are to " practise, and have a personal concern in?" For my own part, I can recollect but one instance, the late alteration of the style, which gave offence, as I have heard, to some elderly females, by displacing, as they thought, some of their darling festivals, particularly christmas-day. For the rest, so far as this instance is in point, nothing can be more unlucky for Mr. White, and the cause he is supporting. It is an incident that hath happened since his pamphlet was published: and the general acquiescence of our people in this new law shews sufficiently, that they are not so very tenacious of their old habits against sense and reason, as he would have it believed, and that he had rashly and unreasonably calumniated his countrymen.

The plain truth is, this gentleman was only dressing up a scarecrow, to deter a certain lay-assembly from taking matters of reformation out of the hands of the clergy into their

own, of which he everywhere betrays the most abject fears.

In the paroxysms of such panics, it is usual for the party affected to catch up the first weapon that falls in his way, and to deal his blows with so unsteady an hand, and so undiscerning an eye, as oftentimes to maim or bruise a friend, instead of an enemy. So hath it happened to this valiant champion on the present occasion.

He hath drawn so detestable a picture of the common people, that it may very well frighten any assembly of men in their wits, from meddling with them in any province, civil or religious. But is it not natural to ask, how came our countrymen into this degenerate state? There have been times, when they were more reasonable and condescending to the wisdom of their superiors. How come they, particularly, to be so weak, ignorant, and injudicious in religious matters? Does not this representation carry with it some reflection on those who should have taught them better? And who should these be, but the appointed teachers of religion; — the bishops and pastors of the church, who receive some millions annually as a consideration for their watching for the souls of the people, and particularly for instilling into them christian knowledge, and christian principles?

Take the matter as Mr. White hath exhibited it, and you can perceive no trace of any due pains taken with them this way. If there is any appearance in his book that their ecclesiastical superiors have taught them any thing,

it is only that sort of sense which leads to some respect for themselves, while they have suffered them to act and think, with respect to their civil governors, whatever their unruly headstrong wills and affections may suggest to them, and will it not be said, that the clergy may perhaps foment this spirit of faction and independence towards their lay-superiors, the better to secure the dependence of this headstrong multitude upon themselves?

In my opinion, Mr. White's friends *in high stations* could not have pitched upon a worse advocate to plead their cause than himself. It might have been said on the behalf of the clergy of the present generation at least, that the people were corrupted before they came into their hands;—that these extreme degrees of degeneracy cannot be supposed to have been contracted in the compass of a few years—that our present bishops and pastors were obliged to take the people as they found them—but that they were using their utmost endeavours to correct their principles, and meliorate their habits, and had reason to hope for success in due time.

But Mr. White, by alledging that this licentious spirit of the people is still increasing, leaves room to believe, that the present generation of religious pastors are just as negligent of their charge as their predecessors.

But, to leave this gentleman a while to himself, I could never persuade myself that the argument in defence of the christian clergy, drawn from the nature of the times they lived in, however it may have been managed, is of

any sort of weight. An enterprising genius of the present age seems to have made the most of it, in a late attempt to restore the fathers, so called, to some part of the credit they had lost under the examination of Daillè, Whitby, Barbeyrac, Middleton, and others.* And how has he succeeded? Has he shewn, in opposition to the charges brought against them by these writers, that they were judicious critics and interpreters of holy writ; accurate reasoners; sound moralists; consistent and conscientious casuists; or even credible witnesses to matters of fact? By no means. His defence of them is founded upon the concession, that they were defective in all these articles, not through their own fault, but the error of the times. On this head this ingenious writer takes great pains to shew, by a long induction of particulars, how learning and science were abused, corrupted, and diverted from the purpose, either of discovering or maintaining the truth, in the different schools and sects of pagan orators, sophists, and philosophers. Among these, it seems, the fathers had their first rudiments, and the fashion of the times keeping up the reputation of these depraved methods of reasoning, &c. the fathers were obliged to deal with their pagan rivals in their own way, and to play their own sophistry and prevarication upon them in their turn.

Is it possible this acute writer should impose this state of the case upon himself, or hope to impose it upon his readers, for a full justifica-

* Warburton's Julian, Introduction.

tion of the fathers? For to what does all this learned harangue amount, but to this, that the fathers, instead of reforming, were themselves corrupted by the men and the times they lived in?

If the times had not been faulty, there had been no occasion for the fathers to mend them: and, as they undertook this province, it is but reasonable to suppose they had means and expedients in their hands, adequate to the discharge of it. These means and expedients, they themselves confess, were the holy scriptures, from whence they might have been furnished with all necessary truths, as well as with the methods of inculcating them in *simplicity and godly sincerity*, without having recourse to *the inticing words of man's wisdom*. Who gave them a commission to model the truths of the gospel to the taste of a licentious and corrupt world? or to subtilize the plain doctrines of Christ and his apostles, by the chemistry of the reigning philosophy? I do not know, indeed, that the fathers pretended to any such authority. But if they did, we, who have in our hands the only authentic commission they had to teach, and the exemplification of it in the practice of the apostles, have no occasion to believe them.

The memorable Mr. Hales of Eton, who saw as much *of the right use of the fathers*, and as soon, as Mr. Daillè himself, and perhaps had full as much candour with respect to the allowances that ought to be made on account of their situation in the world, was well aware of the apology that this learned doctor

has made for them; but however seems to have paid little regard to its merit.

Archbishop Laud, offended at the freedoms Hales had taken with church-authority and tradition, in his tract concerning *schism*, put the honest man to his purgation, which he underwent with a degree of courage, decency, and good sense, that would have done him honour, had he left nothing behind him but that single letter to Laud.

"I am thought," says this excellent person, "to have been too sharp in censuring antiquity, beyond the good respect which is due unto it. In this point, my error, if any be, sprang from this, that, taking actions to be the fruit by which men are to be judged, I judged of the persons by their actions, and not of actions by the persons from whom they proceeded. For to judge of *actions* by PERSONS and TIMES, I have always taken to be MOST UNNATURAL."*

* See Mr. Hales's letter to archbishop Laud, usually printed at the end of bishop Hare's *Difficulties and Discouragements*, &c. The tract concerning *schism* was written in the year 1636, and this apologetical letter very soon after; which I mention on account of a passage in it, that carries with it a very strong presumption, that the first clause in our twentieth article, concerning *church-authority*, was not at that time held for authentic. The passage I mean is this: "I count in point of decision of church-questions, if I say of the "authority of the church, that it was none; I know no adversary I "have, the church of Rome only excepted. For this cannot be "true, except we make the church judge of controversies; the contrary to which we generally maintain against that church." Would Hales have said this, and said it too to such a man as Laud, if he might have been confronted with an authentic book of articles? About three years before, *viz.* in 1633, the authenticity of this first clause of the 20th article had been publicly debated in the divinity

Whether the authority of Mr. Hales, with so sensible a consideration to support it, should

ſchools at Oxford, upon occaſion of Peter Heylin's diſputing for his doctor's degree. Prideaux, the profeſſor, read the latin article out of the *Corpus Confeſſionum*, publiſhed at Geneva, 1612, without the clauſe. Heylin objecting to this authority, ſent a friend [one Weſtly] to a neighbouring bookſeller's, who furniſhed him with an Engliſh copy of the articles, with the diſputed clauſe, which he read aloud, and then delivered to the by-ſtanders to ſatisfy themſelves. This, it ſeems, had the deſired effect. But as the author of the *Hiſtorical and Critical Eſſay on the thirty-nine articles* obſerves, with very little reaſon: "for," ſaith he, "the engliſh edition pro-"duced, which was, in all probability, the late edition ſet forth with "the king's declaration, ſeems very improper to determine the con-"troverſy by, when the queſtion related to the latin articles. If any "latin copy of the articles, printed by authority, had been brought "into the ſchools, the auditory muſt have been ſatisfied of the con-"trary, if they had judged of the authority of the clauſe by a prin-"ted copy of the articles." *Introd.* p. 28. Upon this fact, I ſhall take the liberty to make a few remarks. 1. There is no evidence of this victory but Heylin's own. *Examen Hiſtoricum*, 1ſt. Appendix, p. 217; unleſs you will believe the compiler of Heylin's article in the *Biographia Britannica*, who hath added to the original hiſtorian's account, that, "by this ocular demonſtration, Pri-"deaux, as well as his partizans, was ſilenced." It appears, by the ſequel, related by Heylin himſelf, that Prideaux and his partizans were *not* ſilenced, but remained convinced after, as well as before, this event, that the clauſe was ſpurious. 2. As Heylin read the clauſe in latin, he was bound to verify it by an authentic latin copy. This he knew he could not do, and therefore gave the cue to Weſtly, to bring him ſuch a copy as would ſerve the turn; and Weſtly would have been highly to blame to bring him a copy without the clauſe, if there was a copy of any ſort to be had with the clauſe. 3. Heylin himſelf tells us, that the very next year, *viz.* 1634, latin copies of the articles were printed at Oxford without the clauſe, as ſuppoſed by the encouragement of Prideaux (ſo far was Prideaux or his partizans from being either *ſatisfied or ſilenced by Heylin's* engliſh copy.) For this, Heylin tells us, Prideaux received a check from Laud, then chancellor of the Univerſity; "ſo, continues Hey-"lin, the printers were conſtrained to re-print the book, or that part "of it at the leaſt, according to the genuine and ancient copies."

not be of superior weight to Dr. W———'s, backed only with a large quantity of precari-

Ibid. p. 218. Mr. Collins calls this a forgery, and surely not without reason, if, before that constraint, there were no latin copies which had the clause. But all this management on the side of the clause would not do. The latin articles were still printed without the clause. And I have now before me a latin edition of the articles without the clause, printed at Oxford, by Leonard Litchfield, printer to the University, in the year 1636. And this brings us down to the date of Hales's letter to Laud, the expression in which letter is equal to a thousand witnesses, that the first clause of the twentieth article, as it now stands in our present editions, was not held, by the most learned and judicious divines of those days, to be of the least authority whether it was found in latin or english copies. But here rises a new advocate, who will needs have church-authority to be equally asserted by the twentieth article, whether you admit the disputed clause or no. This is no other than the compiler of Dr. Heylin's life in the *Biographia Britannica*, who, having cited the passage which I have put down above, from the introduction to the *Historical and Critical Essay on the thirty-nine articles*, thus proceeds: "But, "after all, what is there in the latin article, as read by Prideaux, "any more than in the english one produced by Heylin, that con- "tradicts the position of this latter, which gave so much offence? "Where is the difference in sense between *Non licet ecclesiæ quic- "quam instituere quod verbo Dei scripto adversetur;* and *the "church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority "in controversies of faith; yet not so as to ordain any thing con- "trary to God's written word.* Here is no real, but a seeming "diversity only. For though the latin is negatively, and the en- "glish affirmatively expressed, yet the affirmation of the one is implied "in the negation of the other; for is it not an absurdity to talk of "limiting a power which does not exist? If the church then had "not generally, a power of decreeing, it would be nonsense to say, "she might not decree contrary to God's word. The saying, she "may not ordain any thing contrary to the scriptures, infers, she "may ordain any thing relating to her province, that is consistent "with them. Whether the church always confines herself within "due bounds, or may not sometimes misuse her authority? whether "she has any authority in such things at all? or, finally, whether "there is such a thing as a church, according to Heylin's accepta- "tion of that term? are other points; but most certainly the twen-

ous speculation upon very doubtful facts, must be left to their respective readers. For my

"tieth article of the church of England, whether latin or engliſh, ſeems "as favourable as need be wiſhed to the cauſe Heylin defended." Thus far the biographer; who attempts, we ſee, to ſlip in church-authority upon us at a back door, which, he would have us believe, ſtands open to receive it. But, had he looked up to the text upon which he is commenting, he would have ſeen, that, without the firſt clauſe of the article, Heylin could by no means have eſtabliſhed any one of his three poſitions. The ſecond of theſe poſitions is, that *the church hath authority of interpreting the ſacred ſcriptures.* Heylin conſiders the church under two ideas, 1. The church repreſentative, meaning the clergy; and, 2. The church diffuſive, meaning the aggregate of head and members together. *Vid. Examen Hiſtoricum*, u. ſ. p. 218. In theſe poſitions he means the church repreſentative, excluſive of the church diffuſive. Now, if the church repreſentative hath authority to interpret the ſacred ſcriptures, the church diffuſive is precluded from judging, whether the ordinances and decrees of the church repreſentative are contrary to God's word or not. But this authority of interpreting the ſcriptures depends entirely on the affirmance of the church's authority in controverſies of faith: It is true, there is a negative upon the church's authority to ordain any thing contrary to God's written word, in the ſubſequent part of the engliſh article. But ſtill the church repreſentative (in modern language, the governors of the church) having an excluſive authority to interpret the ſcriptures, is the ſole judge of the agreement or contrariety of her ordinances, when compared with the word of God. Let us now conſider the terms of the latin article, as read by Dr. Prideaux: *Eccleſiæ non licet quicquam inſtituere quod verbo Dei adverſetur, neque unum ſcripturæ locum ſic exponere poteſt, ut alteri contradicat.* The biographer underſtands this, I ſuppoſe, of the church repreſentative, and for the preſent, we will underſtand it ſo too. Now, where-ever there is a *non licet*, there is a law implied, and likewiſe a judge of tranſgreſſions againſt that law. Who then is the judge of theſe inſtitutions, with reſpect to their agreement with the word of God? Not the church repreſentative, for here is no authority given her, in that capacity, in controverſies of faith; no excluſive power of interpreting the ſcriptures. The conſequence is, that the power of judgment devolves upon the church diffuſive, the *cœtus fidelium*, as it is called in the foregoing article. But if you bring in the affirmative clauſe, veſting the church-repreſentative with authority in controverſies of faith, and if upon it you build an ex-

own part, I am inclined to think, the safer apology for the fathers would have been that observation which the same learned doctor mentions elsewhere to have been made upon Arnobius and Lactantius, namely, that they undertook the defence of christianity before they understood it. This is a case which was perhaps common to all the fathers, and admitted of a reasonable excuse; the same which the apostle Paul allows in a similar one, they "had a zeal for God, but not according to "knowledge."*

clusive authority to interpret the scriptures, the church diffusive will be obliged to receive implicitly whatever the church representative sees fit to obtrude upon her. The diversity then between the latin and english article, is a real diversity. According to the latin article, the church representative has a power of instituting or ordaining, subject nevertheless to the judgment and controul of the church diffusive. According to the english article, the church representative is vested with authority in controversies of faith, which implies an exclusive authority of interpreting the scriptures, and consequently is the sole judge of those limitations mentioned in the subsequent parts of the article; and consequently again, her authority is boundless; nor has the church diffusive any right, upon this state of the case, to judge whether the church representative misuses her authority or not.

* Perhaps the most blameable part of the conduct of the fathers so called, was their introducing pagan institutions into christian worship. And this might be called the fault of the times. But Casaubon thought they were well justified in this practice, by the example of the apostle Paul. His words are these: *In ea disputatione* [he is speaking of his Excercitations] *de nominibus Eucharistiæ, unum est caput de nomine* mysterium. *Observavi singularem patrum prudentiam, qui paganorum multa instituta ad pios usus retulerunt. Ego non nego posteriorum culpa, multa mala inde provenisse: sed piorum illorum veterum factum mordicus defendo exemplo* Pauli. Epist. 931. Jac. Aug. Thuano. edit. Alm. Here then is no fault either of the men, or of the times. The example of an apostle precludes all blame of course; nor can we ascribe this instance of *singular prudence* to a *zeal without knowledge*. As to the share the fathers had in introducing these pagan institutions, there

Whether the case of our modern fathers would admit of a like apology, is not material to inquire, as it is certain, that an advocate who should offer it on their behalf, would meet with no thanks at their hands. *They say, they see* as well as others, that things are out of order in the church, but alledge the unseason-

is no reaſon to think Caſaubon was miſtaken in the fact. What the evils were, of which this introduction was the occaſion, every one knows who is acquainted with the ſtate of popery in the ſubſequent ages. Theſe evils are here put to the account of poſterity. But if the fathers were *ſingularly prudent* in introducing theſe inſtitutions, why the ſhould not poſterity be as well juſtified by the example of the fathers, as the fathers were by the example of St. Paul? For will not poſterity ſay, they introduced theſe additional inſtitutions for the ſame pious uſes for which the fathers firſt adopted the others? We have here, however, a confirmation from matter of fact, that Dr. Middleton was right in deriving the idolatry and ſuperſtition of the church of Rome from the rites of paganiſm. The doctor, however, was to be oppoſed upon this head, right or wrong; for, as ſome of the ritual cuſtoms and ſuperſtitious devotions of popery had found their way into ſome proteſtant churches, it would not have looked well on the ſide of reformed church-rulers to have referred to a pagan inſtitute for the origin of ſuch cuſtoms and devotions. I could indeed point out one liturgic champion, who, being unwilling that certain forms of devotion in the ſervice of the church of England, to which objections had been made, ſhould reſt upon the authority of popiſh precedents alone, thought fit to fetch a parallel caſe from Homer. Dr. Middleton's opponent, however, if he ſtill abides by his hypotheſis, muſt of neceſſity change the poſture of his defence of the fathers. If the ſuperſtitions they introduced aroſe too late to be derived from paganiſm, either the introduction of them was no fault, or, not the fault of the times, but of human nature, a ſort of fault, which may be incident to fathers of more modern times. Eraſmus, who was as good a judge of the riſe of ſuperſtitious ceremonies amongſt chriſtians, as either Caſaubon or biſhop Warburton, derives the ſuperſtitions of popery from thoſe of paganiſm in detail, in a little piece he wrote intituled, *Modus orandi Deum;* and as Dr. Jortin ſays "very juſtly." See the paſſage in his Life of Eraſmus, vol. II. p. 197.

ableness of these times for any attempt to set them right. In the mean time, others see that the infection of the times has, in some degree, laid hold even of these venerable personages, and produced appearances of secularity, which, whenever a reformation shall be happily brought about, we may be sure will not be suffered to disparage their sacred characters, nor to give offence any longer to those weak and short-sighted brethren, who cannot comprehend that such conformity to the world can contribute to bring the times to maturity for planting and bringing forth more evangelical fruits.

But let us do all sides justice, and now proceed to examine how this plea of impracticability has been elucidated and enforced by certain writers, who were a little more prudent and cautious than the above-mentioned Mr. White.

" In all proposals and schemes to be reduced to practice," (says a very dextrous champion of the church of England) " we must " suppose the world to be WHAT IT IS, not " WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE. We must propose, not merely what is absolutely good " in itself, but what is so with respect to the " prejudices, tempers, and constitutions we " know, and are sure to be among us."*

To this doctrine a very eminent name is subscribed, which is likewise subscribed to some other doctrines utterly inconsistent with it, at least in my apprehension, unless conforming to *what the world is*, and conforming to

* Bishop Hoadly's Reasonableness of conformity, *apud Phil. Cantab.* p. 17.

the sovereignty of Christ in his own kingdom, is precisely one and the same thing.*

Be this as it may, the doctrine of conforming to the prejudices, tempers, and constitutions, that we know to be among us, has clearly carried the vogue, and is now pretty generally adopted by the clergy, in whatever repute the rest of the right reverend author's divinity may be with them.

" It is represented, that the world was never less disposed to be serious and reasonable, than at this period. Religious reflection, we are informed, is not the humour of the times; nor can men of any sort be brought to examine their own opinions, and popular fashions, with attention sufficient to enable them to judge either of the efficacy of such remedies as might be proposed by public authority, or the propriety or expediency of administering them."

" We are therefore advised, to exercise our prudence and our patience a little longer; to wait till our people are in a better temper, and, in the mean time, to bear with their manners and dispositions; gently and gradually correcting their foolish and erroneous notions and habits; but still taking care not to offend them with unseasonable truths, nor to throw in more light upon them at once, than the weak optics of men so long used to sit in darkness are able to bear.—In one word, to consider the world as *it is*, and not as *it ought to be*."

This is the common cant of those, both in

* Sermon on the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and the bishop's defences of it.

higher and lower stations, who desire to put a negative upon a review of our ecclesiastical system. It is something, indeed, that, with respect to our present system, they will own that the body of the people sit in darkness; which implies, that, if they were more enlightened, they would have no inconsiderable objections to the forms in which they now acquiesce. But when it is considered from whence this light and truth are to come, namely, from those records which have preserved to us the gospel as it was preached by Christ and his apostles, is it not a little strange, that this truth should be unseasonable, and this light intolerable, after the gospel has been taught, received, and professed, in a succession of generations, for near eighteen hundred years?

But to examine his lordship's doctrine a little more narrowly. What the bishop calls the prejudices, tempers, and constitutions of men, are known to be much oftener, and in much greater abundance, on the side of folly, falsehood, and vice, than of truth, virtue, and good sense. Prejudice and partial affection carry their point every day, against the loudest remonstrances of reason, and the clearest light of revelation. If this were a new, or an incidental case, peculiar to the present, and unknown to former times, we might be at a loss for directions how to deal with it, and excusable enough for taking up with the best expedients that human prudence should suggest. But these, in fact, are the very same circumstances in which our blessed Saviour found the world at his first appearance. The prejudices,

tempers, and constitutions of the men of those days, had in them the very same perverseness and obliquity, of which we complain at this hour; and from the fatal effects of which Jesus came to save such as would hear his voice.

According to the bishop's maxim, our Saviour should have ordered his proposals with a view to the prejudices and tempers of the scribes and pharisees, the leading men among the people to whom he made his first overtures of reformation, and from whom the people derived their own prejudices and tempers.

Instead of this, Jesus seems to have formed what this right reverend author calls an *ecclesiastical Utopia.* He paid little respect to the established church, as it was then modelled. He openly reproved, and by his teaching opposed, the traditionary religion of the rulers of the Jewish church, both as to their forms of worship and points of doctrine; and taught many things on those occasions, which shew he never intended *his* religion should be shut up in a national church, or established upon exclusive conditions. The consequence was, that he was pursued by the great churchmen of those times with their utmost vengeance, even to the death.

This he knew from the beginning would be his fate; nevertheless, what is still more strange! he commanded his apostles, and in them, as it should seem, all who were to succeed them in the same province, to follow his example, and to adhere to the same methods of reforming the world. It seems, he committed the event to the providence of God, who

favoured the plan so far at least, as to make it probable in the highest degree, that if any other had been substituted in its place, there would not have been one christian this day in the world.*

* Among the great variety of critics who have sat upon *The Confessional*, there is one who hath honoured it with his notice in a French publication, intituled, *Memorics Littraires de la Grande Bretagne, pour l'an* 1767, who, having garbled and mangled to his taste, or perhaps to his understanding, the answer given above to bishop Hoadly's plea for accommodating all proposals for reformation, to *what the world is*, not to *what it ought to be*, adds in the margin the following curious annotation, which he calls the *Journalist's Remark*. "The author should not have suffered himself "here to ramble into one of those digressions so common in contro-"versy, by dragging into his system a comparison neither just nor "decent. What resemblance is there between a divine legislator, "who, by working miracles, gives authority to a new religion, "which he comes to teach mankind, and a private person, who de-"livers some sentiments which appear to him to be reasonable, but "which are not supported by indisputable evidence?" After which he adds, from the plenitude of his critical authority, "One "may hurt the best cause by defending it with feeble weapons." Now, if by a private person [*un particulier*] be here meant the author of *The Confessional*, the Journalist should have taxed him, not with *injustice* and *indecency*, but with downright IMPIETY, in comparing himself and his sentiments, to the divine legislator and his heavenly doctrines; an accusation, which, had there been any the least colour for it, the adversaries of *The Confessional* would have eagerly adopted, carefully fostered, and pompously exhibited with every horrible grace of their calumniating rhetorick, long before it appeared in these idle memoirs. That the misrepresentation was the handy-work either of a Frenchman who did not understand English, or of an Englishman who did not understand French, appears from this instance. In stating the arguments of the anti-reformers above, against undertaking any review or amendment of our public forms, it is mentioned as one allegation on the part of the adversaries, that *religious reflection is not the humour of the times;* which is thus translated by the Journalist, *que des reflexions religieuses ne sont point faites pour le tems où nous vivons*, i. e. religious reflections are not *made* [or *designed*] for the time in which we live. Now, whatever opinion the author under the hands of the Journalist might

In answer to this, it hath been suggested, that the circumstances of both clergy and people are very different now, from what they were in the apostles days. The manners and opinions of mankind, it is said, have under-

form of the anti-reformers, he never thought any one of them either so stupid or so wicked, as to alledge, that reflections of which religion is the subject were not made or designed for all times, as much as religion itself, which, without such reflexions, could have no effect upon any times. Nor indeed could the said author ever have imagined, before he saw it upon paper, that any man could be so amazingly blockish, as not to be able to distinguish between the general obligation upon all men at all times to exercise religious reflexion, and the general temper and disposition of men at particular times, and in particular places, to be disaffected to it. Again, according to this translator, *The Confessional* represents Jesus as desiring to change the jewish confession of faith [*du peuple dont il vouloit changer la confession de foi.*] of which there is not one word to be found in the whole book. The jewish confession of faith, depending upon the law and the prophets, our Lord acknowledged in common with the jews themselves; and it was from these common principles espoused on all sides, that Jesus argued against the prejudices and tempers of the people, and against the traditions of the scribes and pharisees, by which they had corrupted the religion delivered by Moses, both as to forms of worship, and points of doctrine. And a very small share of common sense would have informed the Journalist, that the author of *The Confessional* is here arguing, after this grand and venerable exemplar, from the common principle of all protestants, viz. THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES AS A RULE, BOTH OF FAITH AND PRACTICE (and not from the sentiments or ideas of any private individual), that the precepts of Christ ought to be opposed to the tempers and prejudices of a corrupted or misled people at all times, and in all places, and his genuine doctrines substituted in the place of the artificial and traditionary forms of their fallible guides in religion, at all adventures. Faults of mere inattention may be excused, as when this Journalist calls Dr. Carter a divine of Ireland; but mistranslations and interpolations, which are manifestly injurious to the party criticised, and must be fabricated with some degree of deliberation, imply either an ignorance or a perverseness, that should be totally excluded from the province of a literary as well as a municipal judge.

gone great alterations, insomuch that, if ministers were to insist either upon the severe personal discipline, or the unadorned simplicity of faith and worship preached and practised by the apostles, men would rather be prejudiced against, than converted to the practice and profession of the gospel.

But is not this to suppose that, upon every change of public manners, upon every fluctuation of popular opinions, the teachers of religion have a power of varying their rule? that is to say, to suppose what is utterly false? Can they shew any other authentic rule of teaching religion, besides that in the new testament? Does the new testament mention any powers given to preachers to judge of fitness and expediency in respect of events, and, in consequence of that foresight, to vary their doctrine, and accommodate it to supposed exigencies? If they have no such powers, and yet act as if they had, what are they doing but superseding the authority of Christ in his own kingdom, and setting themselves up in his place?

Some, indeed, lay so much to the account of the great difference there is between the manners and sentiments of the present times, and those of our Saviour's ministry, as to suppose that a discretionary power in the clergy to accommodate themselves and their doctrines to the times, must arise from the nature of the case; which they endeavour to justify by various arguments, particularly the example of St. Paul, who *became all things to all men.*

In answer to this, I shall, for the present, admit that the manners and opinions of the

present generation are as remote as you will from the genius and spirit of the gospel; yet you cannot say they are more remote from it, than the manners and opinions of the jews and gentiles were. On another hand, the manners and principles of the jews and gentiles were in no better agreement with each other, than either of them were with the gospel. The gospel was nevertheless preached to them both, as a common measure of believing and obeying unto salvation, and that without any of those accommodations and allowances which are now pleaded for; so that all arguments for such accommodation from the reason of the thing, are absolutely excluded by the practice of our Saviour himself.

As to the example of St. Paul, it is first to be considered, for what end he *became all things to all men*, namely, *that he might gain some. Gain them?* To what?—Why to the profession and practice of christianity. We may be sure, then, that he neither indulged them, nor complied with them, in any thing which was a disparagement to the profession, or inconsistent with the practice, to which he laboured to *gain them.* Dr. Middleton hath insinuated that this saying of St. Paul is hyperbolical,* or, in his own language, *had in it some degree of fiction.* And it is probable the apostle meant no more than that sort of accommodation to the humours of men, which is implied in the *Son of man's coming eating and drinking*, by way of shewing, that the austerer discipline of

* Miscellaneous Tracts, p. 306.

John was not essential to the faith and duties of the gospel. Let our modern accommodators keep within the same bounds, and we shall willingly allow them the benefit of these precedents.

2. But this is not all. St. Paul and his companion Luke have between them left us some remarkable instances of the apostles compliance with, as well as of his indulgence to persons of different religious prejudices. His permission to christians to feast or eat with the gentiles, is plainly qualified by several cautions. His accommodation to jewish customs turned out, in some instances, very unhappily; and I have sometimes thought that there are some, no very obscure marks, discernible in his epistle to the Galatians, that he thought he had formerly gone too far in these compliances. He plainly condemns the practice of circumcision as destructive of the faith of the gospel, at least in a greek or a gentile. And yet it appears he once thought it necessary to circumcise Timothy, who was of greek extraction by the father's side, for no other reason assigned, but *because of the jews who were in those quarters.**

These matters of fact, then, are necessary to be taken in, to illustrate the apostle's meaning in these large expressions. And it is no less

* Acts xvi.—1—3. Some commentators seem willing to account for the apostle's conduct on this occasion, by a maxim of the imperial law, *partus sequitur ventrem*, and by some rabbinical determinations to the same effect. See *Wetstein in loc.* What weight such considerations had with St. Paul in such cases, would be hard to judge.

expedient for us to look at matters of fact nearer home, to set bounds to the fancies which we are too apt to build upon them.

It is now about fifty years since the venerable bishop of Winchester advanced this maxim of considering the world *as it is*, rather than as it ought to be; and as the maxim itself has been almost universally adopted by the clergy, it is but reasonable to expect it should, by this time, have been justified by better fruits, than would have been brought forth by our endeavouring to reform the world by the stricter precepts of the gospel. Are then the men, or the times, upon whom these accommodating methods have been tried, in any better disposition than they were before they were introduced? Are their prejudices rooted out, their tempers softened, their constitutions refined, or their manners purified, by these prudential expedients of reformation? We have seen what Mr. White thought of the matter: and we are told from other hands, that it is the same sort of prejudice, &c. which overawes our superiors from attempting to reform, what they are very sensible greatly wants reforming, in more respects than one.

The bishop of Winchester's maxim is, however, in as much repute as ever: and no wonder. Doctrines, which have in them so much ease and convenience with respect to the teachers of religion, and so plausible an air of moderation towards their disciples, are in no danger of going out of fashion, let them be confronted with ever so many plain facts, or refuted by ever so solid reasoning. They pass

from hand to hand with the perfect approbation of all sides; and with whomsoever it is that we have any disputes, of which the conduct of the clergy makes a part, disquisitors, dissenters, infidels, or heretics, the apology is always drawn from the nature and necessity of the times.

Thus in a late answer to Lord Bolingbroke, we are informed, that "There are times and "occasions when politeness, civil-prudence, "and the private motives of friendship, OUGHT "to determine a man *who is to live in the* "*world* to comply with the state and condi- "tion of the times, and even to chuse the "worse instead of the better method of doing "good."*

How good things may be improved by keeping! In the beginning of the century, compliance with the times was only a matter of prudence and expedience: it is now become a duty.

The adversaries of the doctrine heretofore were only harmless theoretical utopians. They are now *fanatics, enthusiasts,* and *bigots.*— Justice however must be done to this last writer; who tells us, that "there are times and "occasions when the soberest thinker (i. e. "he who is neither fanatic, enthusiast, nor "bigot) will confess, that the interests of par- "ticulars should give way to those of the pub- "lic." And one of these occasions, it seems, is this on which he writes; and where he thinks it would be wrong to admit these considerati-

* Apology prefixed to the third letter of a view of Lord Bolingbroke's philosophy, p. xlix. first edit. 1755.

ons of politeness, civil-prudence, &c.– How so? Because the noble author laid the author of the *View* under a necessity to represent him both as detestable and ridiculous, on account of the freedoms he had taken with *Moses*, *Paul*, &c. and so far his reason is good. But Lord Bolingbroke had taken great freedoms (greater than with *Moses* and *Paul)* with the modern clergy of our own establishment. Had the author of the *View*, therefore, been able to have prevailed upon his own politeness and civil-prudence to have defended *Moses* and *Paul* with sobriety and seriousness, and to have chosen, on this occasion, what he calls the worse method of doing good, some people will be of opinion, that his arguments would have lost nothing by it, either of their strength or perspicuity; and he would certainly have avoided one evil suspicion, which has stuck to him, and of which his friendly monitor forgot to apprize him; namely, that his free treatment of Lord Bolingbroke did not arise so much from his zeal for true religion, as from his sensibility of the affront offered to the modern clergy; in which, it is but too visible, the author of the *View* is personally concerned.

But what are those times and occasions which call for this strain of good-breeding? The learned writer hath not condescended to inform us, nor what sort of good may be done by it. When religion is to be promoted or defended, a plain man would be apt to think, that no times or occasions should make it a duty to chuse a worse method of doing good, but where a better is absolutely not to be had. But

where, as in the present case, a man is supposed to have both methods before him, and yet ought to postpone the better, and chuse the worse, the obligation should seem to arise from some law, or to refer to some rule of moral practice, which hath no connexion with the christian religion.

The learned writer, indeed, hath limited this duty to *the man who is to live in the world.* But which of us is *not* to live in the world, in the common acceptation of that expression? If, indeed, by a man who is to live in the world, is meant a man who is so to live in it as never to give offence ("the thing, says this writer, "of all to be most dreaded *by those who know* "*the world,*") it is well if, in the gospel-account, this politeness, civil-prudence, and private friendship, turn out to be any better than hypocrisy, partiality, worldly wisdom, and respect of persons.

The plain truth is just this. The prejudices, tempers, constitutions, &c. of mankind, with respect to the expedients of reformation proposed in the christian scriptures, have been much the same in all ages since the heavenly preacher of them first appeared. Sensual, worldly-minded, and incorrigible men, hated him, because he reproved their pride, their avarice, their hypocrisy, and other vices, without reserve. And such men hate such preachers to this hour, and will hate them to the end of the world. And yet such doctrines must be preached, with the same unreserved freedom, if the men who are appointed to the office would discharge it faithfully. Unless our prudent

and polite reformers can produce a new revelation, exhibiting new sanctions, and new terms of salvation; or unless they can shew (what indeed some of them have more than half insinuated) that the same occasions which the men of that generation gave to our Saviour, exist no longer, and that pride, avarice, hypocrisy, superstition, and sensuality, are banished from the face of the earth. When they have made either of these appear, then, but not till then, we can allow them to accommodate themselves, their doctrines, and expedients of reformation, to the taste and temper of the times.

But, to proceed a little farther in our examination of these commodious maxims. What consequences do these cautious reformers apprehend, from proposing to the world such measures of reformation, as are absolutely good in themselves, and tend to make men what they ought to be? Few trials, that I know of, have been made upon this plan; nor does it appear by any repeated experiments, what it is that would disappoint them.

On this occasion we are told, "that factions "would be created, dangerous to civil govern- "ment itself, and productive of evils in soci- "ety, which all the good that could possibly "result from such endeavours to reform the "world, would not counterbalance."

I cannot represent this argument in any terms so well adapted to give it its full weight and lustre, as those of a late sensible writer, whose views and occasions will be explained in the sequel.

"I am very sensible, says this gentleman,

" that the truth of any point, or the certainty " of any matter of fact, can never be deter- " mined by the consequences that flow from " it; yet I think it a part which virtue, as " well as prudence, prescribes, to be more *re-* " *served* and *cautious* of meddling, where little " or no advantage can be gained to society; " but where consequences may possibly prove " hurtful; and especially where the point in " question is only speculative. For specula- " tive truth, though it greatly contributes to " the perfection of human nature, may yet be " recovered, in some cases, at too dear a rate. " Whatever unsettles the foundations of go- " vernment, affects the well-being of society, " or ANY WAY *disturbs the peace and quiet of* " *the world*, is of very destructive consequence; " and the man who should retrieve fifty such " truths, at the expence of one faction, would, " in my opinion, be a very pernicious member " of society."*

Either this ingenious person hath written himself quite out of sight of his own principles, or I am not clearsighted enough to discover his meaning. Let me first confess my own ignorance.

1. I cannot comprehend, how any truth that is merely speculative can contribute to the perfection of human nature. Human nature has always appeared to me to advance the nearest to perfection, by the means of moral habits, formed and invigorated by principles of truth, and of religious truth in particular. Whatever discoveries may be made by the way

* Remarks on Dr. Chapman's Charge, &c. p. 9, 10.

of speculation, if they may not be turned to some practical use, or improvement of the moral man, they will pass with me for little better than the groundless visions of imagination.

2. It is equally mysterious to me, how truths that are merely speculative should unsettle the foundations of government.

3. Nor can I possibly conceive, how such truths as greatly contribute to the perfection of human nature should affect the well-being of society. I mean, as I suppose he does, affect it with an evil influence.

4. In the last place, I should have apprehended, that the recovery of *fifty* truths, *which greatly contribute to the perfection of human nature*, would pay the expence of *one* faction at least, even though the peace and quiet of the world should be, in some measure, disturbed by it; unless we must say, that little or no advantage is gained to society, by the recovery of so many such truths, as greatly contribute to the perfection of human nature.

As this ingenious writer has, on this occasion, contrary to his custom, expressed himself loosely and ambiguously, I dare not take upon me to ascertain his meaning. I imagine it, however, to be this. That where speculative errors are established by public authority, it is better to let them rest, than to attempt to remove them at the hazard of a faction, or by any such opposition or remonstrance as any way disturbs the peace and quiet of the world.

Now to this doctrine I would readily subscribe, if I knew of any truth or error of the

religious kind (and of such truth and error this author is here treating) that could be called merely speculative; that is to say, such truth or error as hath no influence or tendency to improve or debase the religious conduct of those who entertain or reject it respectively.* With respect to such truth, or such error, it is of little consequence what becomes of them: but few are the truths or errors that I have met with of this complexion.

It should seem indeed, that this remarker does not restrain this prudence and caution to these insignificant truths and errors. For he says,—WHATEVER unsettles the foundations of

* The French Journaliſt above-mentioned, repreſents this paſſage thus: "Il admet l'objection, s'il s'agit d'erreurs abſolument theoretiques, c'eſt-à-dire, qui n'ayent aucune influence ſur les mœurs et la conduite religieuſe de ceux qui les adoptent. On peut negliger celles de ce genre; mais il n'en connoit point d'abſolument indifferentes aux mœurs, ou au bien de l'Etat." p, 117. and then refers to a marginal note to this effect: "One might here require the author to develope and prove this aſſertion by reaſonings and facts." In the firſt place, the author hath here no aſſertion as is aſcribed to him. He meddles not with the effects that errors abſolutely theoretic may or may not have upon the public manners or the ſtate. He is ſpeaking "only of truths and errors of the religious kind; and ſays, he knows of no ſuch truth or error, which hath not ſome influence or tendency to improve or debaſe the religious conduct of thoſe who entertain or reject it reſpectively." Does the Journaliſt know of any *religious* truth, which hath *not* this *influence* or *tendency?* Let him produce it, and then he may reaſonably require the developement and proof he calls for. In the mean time, be it ſufficient, in the ſecond place, for the author to appeal to the readers of any controverſy, upon any religious point, though ever ſo ſpeculative or theoretic, whether the diſputants on both ſides do not conſtantly endeavour to ſhew the moral tendency of the ſuppoſed truth they would ſupport, and the immoral tendency of the ſuppoſed error they would refute. Let the Journaliſt try his hand upon theſe proofs and developements.

" government, &c. is of very destructive con-
" sequence."

Can this be admitted, without condemning the practice of the apostles, and first preachers of christianity?

These, said their Thessalonian adversaries, *that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also, whom Jason hath received; and these all do contrary to the decrees of* Cæsar, *saying, there is another king, one* Jesus.*

I expect here to be told, that the apostles were falsely accused, and that they made no attempt to unsettle Cæsar's government. I acknowledge it. But the faction was formed upon that supposition, and operated on the well-being of society, upon that occasion at least, with as much malignity as if the charge had been ever so true. And may not the same thing happen again? Has it not happened in many instances, that pious and zealous reformers have been accused of disturbing the public peace, when they were as innocent as the apostles themselves of any such intention?

Besides, no sensible man can doubt but the immediate establishment of christianity in those early days, would have made great alterations in the gentile as well as the jewish civil and religious polity. The total abolition of the latter was the inevitable consequence of the kingship of Jesus; and what struggles and tumults were occasioned by attempting to introduce it, the sacred history has fairly informed

* Acts xvii. 6, 7.

us: and yet, I presume, our Lord imagined, the truths that would thus be recovered to mankind, would more than atone for these temporary inconveniencies: otherwise he would certainly have taken and prescribed other measures.

The learned writer, with whom I am making so free, was a second to Dr. Middleton in the controversy concerning the *continuance of miraculous powers in the christian church*, and a very able one; and I the rather hope I have not misunderstood or misrepresented his meaning in the foregoing citation, as he immediately subjoins to it the following apology for meddling in that controversy.

"But, in the present debate [concerning "miraculous powers, &c.] all such fears are "vain and chimerical; where we may dispute "for ever, without unsettling or disturbing "any thing, except some fanciful systems, "which have been ingrafted on the religion "of the gospel, and which some of our present "churchmen, for reasons of policy, have been "endeavouring to defend as absolutely neces-"sary to support it."

That is to say, "The miraculous powers of "the post-apostolic church are not affirmed in "an established article, or homily." Had that been the case, we must suppose, the point could not have been disputed without unsettling, or at least disturbing, something more than a fanciful system of our present churchmen. Something with a more substantial support, than the political reasons above-mentioned.

I am of opinion, that, if some of our ancient

churchmen in former times had foreseen this controversy, or if some of our modern doctors had even yet the power to bring it about, the question, so far as legal decision could give it a sanction, would not be found so naked of this kind of support.* Had this point been secured in due time, the doctors Chapman, Stebbing, Church, and Dodwell, who, for the general, have been so tame in the controversy that you might stroak them, would have thundered about Dr. Middleton's ears from the artillery of an establishment, the moment he had made his appearance in that province; and have plied him with their great and small shot, as long as ever he was in a condition to be galled by it.

I should be glad to know, what, in such circumstances, would have been the conduct of this his ingenious advocate? He will hardly say, that little or no advantage could be gained to society by this debate, after it has been demonstrated by Dr. Middleton, Mr. Toll, and himself, how much the protestant cause is interested in the determination of so important a fact. He calls the system, contrary to that he espouses, a fanciful one, unsupported by any thing but the dirty politics of interested churchmen. Would the circumstance of being established have added any truth or solidity to the system, or given it any more merit with respect to the protestant cause? If not, what would there be in the one case, that ought to hinder a reasonable and conscientious protes-

* See *Historical View*, &c. c. xxvii. note (h.)

tant from exposing and confuting it, more than in the other? Would it be sufficient to excuse a man so persuaded, that a faction might be occasioned by the dispute, and something unsettled and disturbed, which might affect the peace and quiet or welfare of society?

Now, it is very possible that some other person, equally discerning, able, and conscientious as the Remarker, may think some other system of these fanciful divines just as pernicious to the cause of true religion, and just as void of truth and reason, as this of the *miraculous powers;* some system, I mean, which is under the protection of an establishment. What is to be done? Is this man to sit down and acquiesce with the herd, under the apprehension of causing a faction, and unsettling, in some degree at least, the peace and quiet of the world? Had this been the persuasion of good men at all periods, what had been the creed of the protestant, or indeed of the christian world at this instant?

It is well for us that some, both of our forefathers and contemporaries, have had none of these scruples: and it may perhaps add some light to the present enquiry, to remark how it has fared with some of these later adventurers, upon a point of orthodoxy, of which all the churches of Europe are extremely tenacious.

It is well known, that, since the commencement of the present century, the great Athanasius has been attacked by a succession of eminent men, who could not be brought to think his system less fanciful, for being inclosed in the fortress of an established creed.

Mr. Whiston led the way. A faction ensued; and the event was, his expulsion from a famous university, and an exclusion from all other preferment. Dr. Clarke made the next effort; nor could he, who was a much more temperate man, prevent a faction: and what would have come of it in the end, if an effectual interposition from the higher powers had not over-ruled those of the lower, none can tell. More lately, a learned and eminent prelate, in a neighbouring kingdom, opened the trenches once more before the formidable Athanasius, with all his myrmidons and fortifications about him. *Faction* was again the consequence; and, had not death snatched him off the stage in a lucky moment (of which I am informed as I am writing this), he might probably have been sent, whither his mitre and his rochet would not have followed him. There were several others of less note, who had their *factions* as well as these more eminent leaders; but these are enough to explain the case in hand.

Let the next question be concerning these *factions*. Whence did they arise? As far as I can perceive, the laity of Great Britain and Ireland were all this while very much at their ease, carried on their affairs with their usual tranquillity and success; nor did I ever hear, that the well-being of society was at all affected, at any of those periods of time when the Trinitarian controversy was on the anvil. Hence it should seem, that no factions either arose or spread among the common people on these occasions; and yet factions there were, as ap-

pears both by the offence given by, and the molestation returned to, the culprits abovementioned. We must look for them then among the clergy.

Who expelled Mr. Whiston? The churchmen of Cambridge. Who attempted to proscribe Dr. Clarke? The churchmen of the lower house of convocation. Who took counsel against the bishop of Clogher? The great churchmen of Ireland. Who prosecuted Dr. Carter in the ecclesiastical court? The church-officers of Deal, at the instigation as it is said, of a churchman of that place. Who prosecuted Mr. Emlyn in Ireland, and Messieurs Pierce, Withers, and Hallet, in England? The dissenting clergy, abetted, as appeared openly in the first case,* and as was strongly suspected in the latter,† by some great churchmen of the established church. In one word, what layman, who was not the instrument of some one or more churchmen, was concerned in these factions?

Let it then no longer be said, that the times, but that the churchmen, are not ripe for a reformation. The impracticability, as far as yet appears, arises wholly from that quarter. Let the churchmen of the establishment shew themselves desirous of, and sincere in soliciting, a reformation of our ecclesiastical constitution; and, if they miscarry in their endeavours, it is but equitable that the impracticability should no longer be put to their account.

* See Emlyn's works, vol. I. p. 26.

† Tindal's Transl. of Rapin, 8vo. 1746, vol. XXVII. p. 344.

Here, methinks, I perceive a sly orthodox brother, who has all this while hung his ears in a corner, begin now to prick them up, and come forward with this expostulation in his mouth: "What! reform according to the detestable systems of Arius or Socinus! Is it not that you are pleading for? And does not this confirm the suspicions of those who imputed these views to the *free and candid disquisitors?*"

Soft and fair. Let the disquisitors answer for themselves and their own views and principles; but do not prejudge them beforehand. They have laid before you a great many particulars, which perhaps give more open and immediate offence to the common people, than the doctrines of the Trinity; about which, I am apt to think, few of them form any ideas. Had you shewn a disposition to reform these necessary matters, and had you set about it with alacrity, time and credit would have been given you for the rest. This I presume to say on the part of the disquisitors.

On my own part, I am neither afraid nor ashamed to call for a review of our Trinitarian forms, as what, I think, is quite necessary for the honour of the church herself. Consider how the case stands on the very face of our present forms.

"So that in ALL THINGS (κατὰ πάντα) says the "Athanasian creed, the Unity in Trinity, and "the Trinity in Unity, is [or ought] to be "worshiped." Is this the case in all our forms of worship? Turn back to the Litany, and you will see three distinct invocations of the

three persons, to each of whom the term God is assigned; implying a sufficiency in each, in his personal capacity, to hear and grant the petition. Instances, equally remarkable and notorious, of our deviation from the Athanasian maxim, might be given in great abundance. What miserable sophistry Dr. Waterland employed to make our liturgical forms consistent, has been noticed in these papers: nor, to say the truth, is Dr. Clarke under much less embarrassment: and, while these inconsistencies remain, I cannot see how a defender of our forms of worship should be in much better agreement with Athanasius, than Whiston, Clarke, or Clayton. To make these matters consistent, is certainly the proper object of a review, on which side soever of the contradiction the truth may lie.

One of the last pieces published on the subject of the Trinity, was, *An Appeal to the Common sense of all Christian People, &c.* which book has passed through two editions without any sort of reply that I have heard of.* This looks as if able writers were not

* When this was written, I did not know of Dr. Macdonel's answer to the Appeal, and much less of the Appellant's replication, intituled, *The Trinitarian Controversy reviewed*, printed for Millar, 1760. It is something, however, to my purpose, that no Englishman of any name has offered to confute the Appeal, and that the athanasian doctrine seems to be consigned to the sole protection of our Irish champion, who makes so indifferent a figure in the hands of the Appellant, that probably we shall hear no more of him; the said Appellant having said enough to deter wise men of both sides from meddling farther in the controversy, unless in the way of a Review.—More lately indeed, (as I am informed) one Mr. Jones, provoked, it seems, by something in *The Confessional*, hath buckled on his armour, and brandished his bulrush against the able and im-

willing to meddle with the subject, or that willing writers were not able to manage it. Many of the wiser and more thinking part of the clergy have been long sick of the Athanasian creed, and have, by degrees, disused it in their churches: and many of the congregations, where it has been so disused, if by accident an officiating stranger should read it to them in its course, have been known to signify their surprise and dislike by very manifest tokens.*

From these particulars I conclude, and venture to repeat it, that, when our leading churchmen tell us of the impracticability of an ecclesiastical reformation, through the unripeness of the times, the true meaning is, that they cannot obtain their own consent to any measure, or to any attempt of that sort. And no marvel. A reformation that should reach to the extent of our deviations from the scriptures (and, when the door is once opened, who knows how far a reformation might extend?) would not stop at a few liturgical forms and ceremonies. The conductors of it might probably proceed to inquire, how far the present polity of the church stood upon a scriptural foundation? And, should such inquiry be pursued to good effect, the consequence might be, that the repose of some great churchmen would

pregnable Appellant; but with so much indiscreet fury, that even the late grand patron of the Anti-Confessionalists, it is said, refused to inlist him among his retainers.

* See *A serious and dispassionate Enquiry*, &c. concerning some passages in the public liturgy, athanasian creed, &c. p. 80—95, 96. Of this I have been an eye witness more than once.

be grievously disturbed, their labours increased, the nature and tendency of their present occupations greatly altered, and their temporalities reduced to a due proportion to their duties and services.*

The worthy friend who sent me the first notice of the demise of bishop Clayton, and an account of the clerical machinations against him, inclosed in the same packet a small manuscript, intituled, *the bishop of Clogher's speech, made in the House of Lords in Ireland, Feb. 2, 1756.*† I will not answer for the authenticity of this little rescript, though it seems to have passed for genuine in that country; and it is

* "Nothing has misled people more in their notions and desires "of reformation, than their not being able to distinguish between "some abuses, and the functions corrupted by them; so that, instead "of taking away abuses, they have gone to change ancient and ex- "cellent constitutions. On the other hand, nothing has perhaps "heightened this weakness more, than that some have been so zea- "lous for the defence of these abuses, that one would think they love "the function chiefly for the sake of the abuses, and would be little "concerned for it, if these were separated from it. Others, that dis- "like the abuses, yet know not how to part with them, fearing that "the making of some changes may draw more after it; and that the "humour of making alterations, being thus put in fermentation, may "grow so violent, that it will not be easily restrained or governed." Preface to bishop Burnet's Hist. of the Rights of Princes, &c. p. 9. But what if the functions and the abuses are by length of time, and the remissness of indolent authority, become so intimately incorporated, that there is no separating them? Do not the latter sort of anti-reformers here mentioned plainly see this? And is not this the ground of their apprehension? And if, through the perverseness of the former sort (who make up by much the greatest number and strength of anti-reformers,) we cannot have the functions without the abuses, may there not be other functions found out, which would equally answer the end of an effectual reformation?

† It has since been printed at London, for Baldwin and Cooper, 1757.

certain that the bishop moved in parliament for such a bill as is there mentioned. In this speech I find the following passage: "I am persuaded, that if my lords the bishops will but "shew themselves inclined to amend what they "cannot but acknowledge to be amiss, they "will find the laity ready to assist and support "them, rather than otherwise."

No man knew the world better than the late bishop of Clogher. His adversaries objected it to him, after they had ransacked all the obscure corners of the kingdom for scandal, that he knew it but too well. Even they therefore might take his word on this head. But indeed the thing speaks for itself. Whenever the people shall see this impracticability subdued on the part of the clergy, it is impossible they should not be convinced both of the utility of the measure, and of the integrity of those who undertake and promote it. Such instances of self-denial, and so many circumstances of ease and profit sacrificed to the public welfare and edification, cannot but give them the highest esteem and affection for so faithful and disinterested pastors.

I am willing, however, that our spiritual fathers, among whom are some persons of distinguished merit, should have the benefit of every plea that can possibly be offered for their inactivity and acquiescence in our present inconvenient and unedifying system: and if any of them can derive any consolation to themselves, or any apology to the world, for their conduct, from the following concession, I shall not desire to deprive them of it.

" Though the church of Christ," saith a pious and learned writer, " has been thus cor-
" rupted [viz. by copying the church of Rome
" more or less] in all ages and nations, yet
" there have been, and will be, in all, many
" who receive the seal of God, and worship
" him in spirit and in truth : and of these, as
" many have filled high stations as low ones.
" Such persons, though they have concurred
" in the support of what is contrary to the
" pure religion, have, however, done it inno-
" cently with respect to themselves, being led
" thereto by *invincible prejudices.*"*

What particular examples this good man had in his eye, would be hard to say. Perhaps, some of the first bishops of the christian church, commonly called *the fathers*, as well as pastors of more modern times. Let us pitch upon a few of the most eminent of these, and begin with the upper classes first.

The fathers, so called, have ever been esteemed the lights of the christian church, and have been justly revered for their piety and sanctity of manners. But no one will deny, that they were deeply prejudiced in favour of some things, which greatly disfigured and corrupted true religion. The question is, how far these *prejudices* were *invincible ?*

Jerome is one who hath figured in all ages, both on account of the austerity of his discipline, and the superiority of his learning. Both popish and protestant writers have, by turns, put their cause under his patronage ; till the

* Dr. David Hartley's Observations on Man, vol. II. p. 371.

protestants found they were losers upon the balance, and from thenceforward began to look a little more narrowly into the character and merits of the man; and then they found his genius was wholly turned to *bragging* and *dissimulation*,* that he frequently contradicted himself,† and paid little regard so truth, when he had a controversial point to carry, for which Le Clerc gives a very probable reason, namely, his reading and admiring Cicero. "For "Cicero," says this excellent critic, "provided what he says suits his present purpose, "and may make an impression on his audience, takes no thought whether it be true, "nor cares at all whether he hath contradicted it elsewhere."‡

* *Ingenium* Hieronymi *totum fuit ad jactationem & dissimulationem compositum.* Le Clerc, *Quæstiones Hieronymianæ*, III. p. 62.

† Le Clerc, *Sentimens de quelques Theologiens d'Hollande*, &c. Lettre xiii. p. 307.

‡ *J. Clerici Quæstiones Hieronymianæ*, VIII. § xiii. p. 248. He gives several instances of this conduct of Cicero, and observes after Quintilian, and after Cicero himself, that the definition of an orator should not be what it usually was, *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, but *vir callidus mentiendi pro re nata, & dissimul andi peritus.* Le Clerc shews, that Jerome was deeply tinctured with this oratorical craft, and had his *orationes causarum & temporum, non judicii*, as well as Tully; which is likewise acknowledged by Erasmus, his great advocate. But what shall we say to a certain christian divine and critic, who will have it "that in all this Cicero acted no unfair part, "because forsooth he acted it not in his real, but his personated "character." *Postscript to Dr. Warburton's Visitation-sermon, printed for Fletcher Gyles*, 1738. p. 31. A personated character is a fictitious one, and whoever puts on such a character with intent to deceive, seems to me not only to act an unfair, but an immoral part. "Hold," says the nimble casuist: "unfair is an expres-"sion that relates to a man's breeding, to a point of civility, in not

Another excellent pen hath proved these contradictions upon more of the fathers, particularly in one instance which shews a disingenuity, of which the most invincibly prejudiced among them must have been conscious. He has shewn, from the words of above a dozen of them, that when the question was concerning conformity to any particular religion, they all had the clearest conception of the iniquity as well as impiety of intolerance. Nevertheless, his adversary challenged him to shew a single instance, even in those councils of which these fathers were members, and wherein some of them presided, where there was any trace of toleration towards those who differed from the

" impoſing on good company, rather than his morals." The reader will be pleaſed to take notice, that this good company was often a bench of judges, aſſembled to try cauſes of the greateſt importance to the peace and welfare of the community. Had Cicero appeared on the ſtage in the character of Agamemnon, and ſpoke nothing but what Euripides put into his mouth, the good company would have had no reaſon to complain, either of his rudeneſs or his diſhoneſty. But when he appears in the naked character of Cicero the advocate, and endeavours to impoſe upon a ſolemn tribunal, by a falſe repreſentation of facts in a criminal cauſe, he forfeits all pretenſions to the character of a good patriot or an honeſt man : and, whatever becomes of his breeding, in ſo far as he lays claim to theſe titles, is every way unfair. There is, however, one inſtance upon record, which impeaches Tully's breeding. Quintilian informs us, that he boaſted, *ſe tenebras offudiſſe judicibus in cauſâ Cluentii.* Inſtit. Orat. lib. ii. cap. 17. What would be thought of an Attorney-General that ſhould boaſt, he had abuſed and miſled the Judges of the court of king's-bench? Certainly not that he was a polite man. But what is this to Jerome? A great deal to Jerome, and to the reſt of the fathers defended by the prefacer to Julian. The apology for Cicero extends to the philoſophical, as well as rhetorical diſcipline of thoſe times. If that was blameleſs, the fathers who purſued it were ſo too. Their faults were therefore neither faults of the times nor of the men; that is, the fathers had no faults at all.

established faith and opinions. The other knew better than to undertake so hopeless a task; and therefore contented himself with shewing, that these fathers contradicted in their practice, what they had solemnly laid down for their incontestible principles.* On which side of such a contradiction can the invincible prejudice be supposed to lie?

To draw nearer to our own times, and to mention one of the most illustrious characters in all history. Erasmus saw, complained of, censured, and exposed, the corruptions of popery with all freedom. It is hardly possible he should not perceive, that all these corruptions arose from the spurious authority to which the popes laid claim. Many passages, in his comments and paraphrases on the New Testament, shew his discernment in this matter beyond dispute. One, I have pointed out in the note.†

* *Barbeyrac*, Traité de la Morale des Peres, Chap. xii § xl. p. 185.

† *Jam vero de Romani Pontificis potestate pene negotiosius disputatur, quam de potestate Dei, dum quærimus de duplici illius potestate, et an possit abrogare quod scriptis apostolicis decretum est? An possit aliquid statuere quod pugnet cum doctrina evangelica? An possit novum articulum condere in fidei symbolo? Utrum majorem habeat potestatum quam Petrus, an parem? An possit præcipere angelis? Utrum simplex homo sit, an quasi Deus, an participet utramque naturam cum Christo? An clementior sit quam fuerit Christus, cum is non legatur quemquam a purgatoriis pœnis revocasse? An solus omnium non possit errare? Sexcenta id genus disputantur, magnis editis voluminibus, idque a magnis Theologis, præsertim professione religionis insignibus. Atque hæc fiunt non sine manifesta suspicione adulationis, nec sine injuria Christi, ad quem collati principes, quantumvis magni, quid aliud sunt quam vermiculi? An putant hæc placere*

And to these an hundred more might be added. He well knew that the scandalous traffick of indulgences was grounded on the papal power, and upon no more of it than the most moderate doctors asserted to belong to it. If Erasmus was of a different opinion, he might be re-

LEONI *noſtro, germano, veroque Chriſti vicario ; qui tanquam verus paſtor, nihil habet antiquius ſalute gregis chriſtiani ; ut verus Chriſti vicarius, nihil habet carius gloriâ principi ſui Chriſti ?* ERASM. *Annotat.* in 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. Upon this paſſage, I would obſerve, 1. That Eraſmus very well knew that the Tranſalpine divines held all theſe queſtions in the affirmative. 2. That he was little leſs guilty of the adulation wherewith he reproaches them, in calling LEO X. *the true vicar of Chriſt, who had nothing more at heart than the glory of his prince, and the ſalvation of the chriſtian flock.* Eraſmus could be no ſtranger to what all the world knew, namely, that neither the perſonal, nor papal character of LEO, intituled him to any ſuch encomium. 3. He inſinuates, that theſe ſtrains of adulation were diſagreeable to Leo ; and yet it is certain that Leo never diſcouraged them, as Eraſmus very well knew. Palavicini, defending this pope againſt the cenſures of father Paul, who had ſaid, "that he was better acquainted with profane letters, than with ſacred or religious learning," allows the fact : but in alleviation of it ſays, "that he favoured ſcholaſtic divinity, and that he honoured three divines of "this complexion with the purple, and made a fourth maſter of the "ſacred palace." See Bayle's Dictionary, Art. LEO X. Rem. [H]. Theſe divines then above all others were Leo's favourites. Was this, do you ſuppoſe, becauſe theſe doctors had determined the queſtions above-mentioned in the negative ? Was Eraſmus a ſtranger to the promotion of three cardinals or to the characters and ſtudies of the men ? Eraſmus, I ſay, who knew what was doing in every court, and in every corner of Europe ? Let it not be ſaid, that theſe incidents might not have happened when Eraſmus wrote his Annotations. Pope Leo X. died before Eraſmus publiſhed the third of his five editions of the N. T. and the ſame annotation is found in them all. Can it be ſaid, with the leaſt probability, that Eraſmus's prejudices on this head were invincible ?

tained in the church by a prejudice, but certainly not an invincible one.*

Come we now to some doctors of our own reformed church. I do not know of any of our bishops, since the reformation, who has had more incense offered up to him than archbishop Whitgift, and that by the very historian from whom I take the following fact.

In the year 1572, a pamphlet was published in defence of the famous *Admonition* to parliament, intituled, *An Exhortation to the bishops*, wherein their lordships were reminded, "how hard it was to punish the favourers and "abettors of the Admonition, because they "did but disclose the disorders of the church "of England, and only required a reformation of the same, according to the rule of "God's word. Whereas many lewd and light "books and ballads flew abroad, printed not "only without reprehension, but *cum privilegio.*"

Archbishop Whitgift condescended to answer this pamphlet, and to this objection thought fit to say, "it was a fault to suffer "lewd books and ballads touching manners, "but it was a greater fault to suffer books and "libels, disturbing the peace of the church, "and defacing true religion."†

Which was to say, 1. That lewd books and

* See what Bayle says of this subject. Dict. Art. AGRICOLA GEORGE, Rem. [B].

† Strype's life of archbishop Whitgift, p. 40. who honestly tells us, p. 50. that he took the account of Cartwright's reply from Whitgift himself.

ballads, printed with privilege, neither disturbed the peace of the church, nor defaced true religion. 2. That provided the church might quietly enjoy and practise her forms, rites, and ceremonies, titles, and emoluments, it was the less material what were the manners of her members. 3. That true religion consisted in those forms, rites, ceremonies, titles, and powers, which the puritans were for defacing.

These were *prejudices* with a witness, and, if they were *invincible*, what was this man doing so long, in two divinity chairs in Cambridge? Shall we say, that men's *prejudices* become *invincible* as soon as ever you name disorders in the church, and talk of reforming them?

I make a transition from this prelate to archbishop Wake, though the step is a pretty long one. But it is not for want of matter in the interval of time, or of prejudices in the intermediate occupiers of the see of Canterbury, but through a willingness to save the reader's time and my own.

Dr. Wake, then bishop of Lincoln, at the trial of Sacheverell, spoke with great force and propriety in defence of the Toleration act, and in vindication of those who, under a commission from king William, 1689, were appointed to review the liturgy, and other parts of our ecclesiastical constitution, for which, according to the said Dr. Wake, there was great occasion. When the schism bill was in agitation, Dr. Wake, still bishop of Lincoln, opposed it in its progress through the house of

Lords, and, when passed, protested against it. But when, in the year 1718, this same schism bill was attacked, Dr. Wake, then archbishop of Canterbury, opposed the repeal of it with all his might, alledging, that it was one of the main bulwarks and supporters of the established church; whereas, in his speech above-mentioned, he insisted, that the established church neither lost nor suffered any thing by the toleration of dissenters. On which side lay the invincible prejudice in this case?*

This is the farthest I chuse to venture towards the present times, over which, if I could, I would drop a veil for the sake of some particulars, who, like *Mercurius trivialis*, have pointed out the right road, without stirring an inch themselves from the centre of the cross lanes. Peace be with those of them that are gone. To such of them as remain, I would recommend the serious consideration of what follows that concession last cited from Dr. Hartley:

"Nevertheless, when it so happens, that "persons in high stations in the church have "their eyes enlightened, and see the corrup-

* "A very ancient and worthy gentleman, now living [viz. "1758,] speaking occasionally of archbishop Wake, in a company "where I lately was, said, he well remembered to have seen his "grace returning from court, on the day that he had been there to "kiss his majesty's hand upon his advancement to the see of Can-"terbury. Dining that day at a friend's house, where Dr. S. "Clarke was one of the guests, he mentioned this incident; upon "which the company, as is common, made their several remarks "upon that promotion. Dr. Clarke continued silent for some time; "but said at last, *we have now an archbishop who is priest enough.*" Memoir communicated to the author by a learned friend. It seems, Dr. Clarke knew the man better than some others did.

" tions and deficiencies of it, they must incur " the prophetical censures in the highest de- " gree, if they still concur, nay, if they do " not endeavour to reform, and purge out " these defilements; and though they cannot, " according to this proposition, expect entire " success, yet they may be blessed with such " a degree, as will abundantly compensate " their utmost endeavours, and rank them " with the prophets and apostles."*

Nothing can possibly expose the futility of any pretences to defer reformation upon account of the unripeness of the times, more effectually, than the solemn truths contained in these few words. Dr. Hartley, indeed, proceeds to observe, that " this corruption and " degeneracy of the christian church—has, all " other things being supposed to remain the " same, suited our circumstances in the best " manner possible, and will continue to do, " as long as it subsists. God," says he, " brings good out of evil, and draws men to " himself in such manner as their natures will " admit of, by external pomp and power, by " things not good in themselves, and by some " that are profane and unholy. The impurity " of mankind is too gross, to unite at once " with the strict purity of the gospel." Hence he takes occasion to infer, that good men ought to submit to the ecclesiastical *powers that be*, for conscience sake, as well as to the civil ones. And hence, I do not doubt, but *the ecclesiastical powers that be*, will infer the *no ne-*

* Observations on Man, u. s.

cessity of altering any thing in their present systems: and so we get rid of these prophetical censures at once.

But Dr. Hartley knew well enough what he said, and was only explaining a case which he found in his bible. The prophet Isaiah speaks of certain *wise* and *prudent* men of his time, who *taught the fear of God by the precept of men.** But inasmuch as the fear of God was taught, though by things evil, profane, and unholy in themselves, whatever Dr. Hartley has said concerning God's bringing good out of evil, is just as applicable to this period of the jewish church, as to any posterior state of the christian. It was upon these considerations, that our Saviour and his apostles observed the law, and prescribed obedience to those who sat in Moses's seat.

But did these considerations exculpate the *wise* and *prudent* men of Isaiah's time, or the scribes and pharisees of Christ's days, *who taught for doctrines the commandments of men?* By no means. The prophetical censures fell heavily on them both. And if our enlightened churchmen in high stations would avoid them, let them go and learn what that meaneth, *except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

They will tell us, perhaps, that, sensible as they are of these corruptions, they are equally sensible of the impossibility that their en-

* Chap. xxix. 13.

deavours or remonstrances should overcome the prejudices or perverseness of their brethren, especially as they would be likely to stand alone and unsupported in the conflict; and consequently that there is not the least hope that reformation would be advanced, in whole or in part, by the utmost efforts they could make.

But let them try their strength, and then they will have a better right to this apology. Men's endeavours in this, as well as in other cases, are not to be suspended by the improbability of success, or even by trials apparently fruitless. We are not judges what success our pious endeavours may have in due time. *The kingdom of* GOD *cometh not with observation.* The light of our testimony may appear to be wholly extinguished, and the seed we sow totally buried and corrupted; and yet the one may blaze out, and the other spring up and flourish, in its due season, how, and where, and when, we are unable to foresee or even to conceive.

I believe, no book of equal importance ever sunk so suddenly into oblivion as the *Free and Candid Disquisitions;* nor was any other ever treated with more contempt and scorn by those who ought to have paid the greatest regard to the subject of it. In short, its pernicious tendency was echoed in the conversation of every expectant of church-preferment, whose success depended, in any degree, upon the favour of his ecclesiastical superiors.

But, in spite of all these arts, and all this contumely, the book has had no inconsiderable effects among particular persons. It has

caused the forms of the church to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, where they have been found greatly wanting. Many, who formerly paid an implicit veneration to them, begin now to compare and reason upon them, and to draw inferences and conclusions by no means in their favour. These impressions may possibly be working silently and imperceptibly to a good end; and they who wish well to the prosperity of our Israel, may reap the good fruit of them, either in the present or a future generation. In the meantime, others may *sleep on, and take their rest*, perhaps, for many years to come, secure in their numbers and influence, against the importunity of clamorous Disquisitors. The Almighty works those things which are well pleasing to him, in his own way, and in his own time, by methods to us inscrutable, and out of the reach of human projects. Methods of violence seldom advance the interests of peace and truth. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* And though *the spirit of slumber* should have seized the public for the present, the drowsiness will in time be shaken off, and the hearts and understandings of pastors and people opened, as of one man, and prepared to receive those truths, which at present are confined to the breasts of a few, who, by the blessing of God, have found the means of emancipating themselves from the bondage of fear, the idolatry of lucre, and the enchantments of worldly wisdom, and who, having borne their testimony in due season, though without effect for the present, will be found to have deliver-

ed their own souls in the solemn hour of visitation.

Having now examined the pleas that have been offered against a reformation of our ecclesiastical system, it may possibly be expected I should descend to particulars, and point out some of the principal objects, at least, of the reform I may be supposed to solicit.

The equitable reader, however, will recollect, that my subject leads me only to *one* particular, the case of subscription to human creeds and confessions, and other ecclesiastical forms, which are required to be assented to, as being *agreeable to the word of God.* Undoubtedly such of these as have not this agreement with holy writ, ought not to be retained in the church. Nevertheless, as something is due to the ignorance and prejudices of well-meaning people, it may be allowed not to be expedient to discontinue the *use* of them all at once, provided proper endeavours are used to prepare the people for their removal at a seasonable time, by informing them wherein their disagreement with the christian scriptures consists. But nothing can be more cruel, nothing more inequitable, than to insist, that candidates for the ministry should give their solemn assent and consent to articles of faith, and modes of discipline and worship, which it is certain many of them must think to be inconsistent with the word of God, and which, for that reason, they are obliged to wrest and distort from their natural original meaning, before they can reconcile themselves to this article of conformity.

I am not now looking into any man's heart. I have given indisputable proofs of what I am here advancing, from the writings of men of great eminence in the church of England, by the systems of some or other of whom, it is reasonable to suppose, the common run of subscribers form their sentiments, or quiet their scruples.

This stumbling-block should therefore be removed out of the way, with the utmost expedition. As a test of opinions, it is utterly useless. It is an affair in which the prejudices of the people have nothing to do. The candidates for the ministry are supposed to be persons of learning, capable of judging of such things; and liable to be hurt and disquieted by so disagreeable a dilemma as they are brought into by this piece of discipline. If there are any of this class weak enough to be offended with the removal of this barrier of orthodoxy, why let *them* be gratified too. The restoration of their sensible and conscientious brethren to their christian liberty, need not preclude them from expressing their belief of, and their veneration for, every thing established in the church of England, in as high terms as they can invent.*

* With all alacrity would I turn this claſs over to Dr. Rutherforth's church-governors, upon the principle which induced biſhop Andrews to give up his brother Neale's purſe to king James I. The ſtory is in point, and not unedifying. "The biſhops of Winches-"ter and Durham (Andrews and Neale) were ſtanding behind "the king's chair, while his majeſty was at dinner. His majeſty "aſked the biſhops, *My lords, cannot I take my ſubjects money, "when I want it, without all this formality in parliament?* The "biſhop of Durham readily anſwered; *God forbid, Sir, but you*

But it may be demanded, would you have the church to authorize and send forth minis-

" *ſhould; you are the breath of our noſtrils.* Whereupon the " king turned, and ſaid to the biſhop of Winchester; *Well, my* " *lord, what ſay you? Sir,* replied the biſhop, *I have no ſkill* " *to judge of parliamentary caſes.* The king anſwered, *no put-offs* " *my lord; anſwer me preſently. Then, Sir,* ſaid he, *I think it* " *lawful for you to take my brother* Neale's *money, for he offers* " *it.*" Biog. Brit. ANDREWS. *Remark* [E]. It has been very common with obnoxious churchmen under the gentle correction of a laugh, to complain, that religion was ridiculed in their perſons. Leſt any ſuch imputation ſhould, upon this occaſion, be glanced at me, I think proper to declare, that, in my opinion, this little anecdote is capable of a very ſerious application to the caſe in hand. The property that every proteſtant has in his religious opinions is, or ought to be, as valuable to him, as the property he has in his purſe. Why ſhould he, therefore, give up the former to the commands of church-governors, any more than the other to the arbitrary will of his prince? Perhaps the force and tendency of this queſtion will be more ſenſibly felt, if we ſuppoſe a caſe, which, if Laud's canons in 1641 had taken effect, was by no means an impoſſible one. Let us ſuppoſe then Neale's axiom to have been faſhioned into an article of religion to the following purpoſe: *The King's Majeſty is the breath of our noſtrils; therefore, by the law of God, our whole temporal ſubſtance is at his royal diſpoſal, without the intervention of any grant from an inferior authority.* Suppoſe this article to have been *eſtabliſhed*, and I will venture to ſay, that Rogerſes and Welchmans would readily have been found to prove it from ſcripture. For example. *There went ont a decree from* Cæſar Auguſtus, *that all the world ſhould be taxed.* Here we have a *tax*, but not one word of a *parliament.* And then, to clinch it, throw in the text, *render therefore unto* Cæſar *the things that are* Cæſar's; and I will be bound to ſhew, that you have as good a ſcripitural proof for this article, as ſome commentators have brought to authorize ſome others that I could name. And can it be ſuppoſed that, this article having thus gained a ſettlement among the reſt, doctors and profeſſors would have been wanting to plead for its everlaſting poſſeſſion, on the bare pretence, " that it would be a weakneſs and levity in church-go- " vernors, unbecoming their office, and inconſiſtent with the truſt " committed to them,—to change their church-confeſſion as often as " any are found, who diſlike the faith and doctrines contained in it." I ſay the bare pretence; for the premiſes from which this weakneſs

ters and pastors among the people, without taking any security of them for the faithful discharge of their office, and particularly, without guarding against their preaching false and erroneous doctrines?

Answer: in our office of ordination, there are *eight* questions put to every priest; the an-

and levity are inferred, have no more in them than a pretended vindication of a general right church-governors are supposed to have, to require the clergy to subscribe and assent to SOME confession of faith and doctrines, without saying a syllable in defence of any particular confession, whose articles may be sufficiently exceptionable in point of scripture authority, to make it unbecoming the office, and inconsistent with the trust committed to protestant church-governors not to change it. The article being thus established, proved, and fortified, let us farther suppose, that Bancroft or Laud had enjoined it to be subscribed by every layman worth one hundred pounds in land, money, or stock (as indeed without that circumstance such an article would have done nothing for a James or a Charles,) on the pain of being refused to trade, bear office, or acquire an increase of property any other way; what, I desire to know, would have been the sentiments of any liberal-minded layman upon such an imposition? Would he, without reluctance, have sacrificed his temporal property to the doctrine of a church-governor, by an explicit declaration under his hand, that the article was agreeable to the word of God? Would the sophistical vindication of a general right in church-governors to require a subscribed declaration of the truth of some confession of faith and doctrines, have convinced him of the equity, the propriety, the reasonableness, of requiring him to subscribe to the truth of this particular article?—I urge these considerations no farther. I perceive indignation arising in the generous spirits of my countrymen at the very suggestion. All the use I would make of it is this. Let but the sensible benevolent layman allow it to be probable, that there are serious and conscientious protestants, who value the property they have in their religious opinions, as much as others do their temporal rights and possessions, and he will want no other argument to pity, and, to his power, to assist them to get quit of the yoke; and, as he himself is happily free from one of these burthens, to join his brethren who find themselves aggrieved and oppressed by the other, in a decent but earnest and ardent solicitation to the legislature that they may be delivered from it.

swers to the *second*, *fourth*, *fifth*, *sixth*, and *seventh* of which, seem to me to contain as ample security in this behalf, as any christian church can desire or can be authorized to demand.

Here the priest declares, and declares it at the altar, "that he is persuaded that the holy "scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine "required of necessity for eternal salvation, "through faith in Jesus Christ; that he has "determined, by God's grace, out of the said "scriptures, to instruct the people committed "to his charge, and to teach nothing (as re-"quired of necessity to eternal salvation) but "that which he shall be persuaded, may be "concluded and proved by the scripture.—-"[He promises, the Lord being his helper, that "he will be ready, with all faithful diligence, "to banish and drive away all erroneous and "strange doctrines, contrary to God's word;*] "—that he will use both public and private "monitions, as well to the sick as to the whole, "within his cure, as need shall require, and "occasion shall be given;—that he will be di-"ligent in prayers, and in reading of the holy

* Upon a second consideration, this promise might, perhaps, be better omitted. One honest man may hold doctrines upon a persuasion that they are agreeable to the word of God, which doctrines another honest man may think to be erroneous and strange, and contrary to God's word. It may too be difficult to banish and drive away the doctrines, without banishing and driving away the man who holds them: This is therefore a promise which cannot be kept consistently with the principle of the protestant religion, supposing the doctrines here meant to be doctrines merely religious; and supposing farther, that, by *banishing* and *driving away*, any kind of legal prosecution is intended. But if, by *banishing* and *driving away*, no more is meant than opposing to them argument, exhortation, or instruction, undoubtedly every man safely may promise, and every clergyman ought to perform, in this way, as much as he is able.

" scriptures, and in such studies as help to the " knowledge of the same, laying aside the " study of the world and the flesh;—that he " will be diligent to frame and fashion his own " self and his family according to the doctrine " of Christ, and to make both himself and " them, as much as in him lieth, wholesome " examples and patterns to the flock of Christ; " —that he will maintain and set forwards, as " much as in him lieth, quietness, peace, and " love, among all christian people, and espe- " cially among those that are or shall be com- " mitted to his charge."

I omit the *first*, *third*, and *eighth* of these questions, and the answers to them, without any remark, because, whatever I or any other person may think of them, these declarations, in my opinion, are what no conscientious minister would refuse to make, and are as good security as any protestant church can in reason demand, for the due discharge of the pastoral office; and, I believe, I should have few opponents, if I should add, that whoever performs thus much of what he promises at his ordination, will give little occasion to the church to bind him in any stricter obligation. I will go one step farther still. There is nothing in this declaration, but what the dissenting clergy themselves might declare; and, being laid down as a common measure for all licensed or tolerated ministers, one complaint would be effectually removed, namely, that the dissenting clergy are entitled to their privileges and emoluments upon easier terms, than those of the established church.*

* I am just now, May 29, 1770, informed, that the late Dr. Clarke hath left behind him some M.S. corrections of the liturgy,

But, all this while, you will say, we have no evidence of this man's opinions; he may think very differently from the church, when he comes to interpret the scriptures. The words of this declaration are *general* and *indeterminate:* and, after all, they are but *words.* Here is no *subscription;* and consequently nothing whereby the declarer may be convicted of falsehood or prevarication, in case he should break his engagements with the church.

I answer to some of these objections by asking some questions. What evidence have you of the opinions of him who subscribes to the xxxix articles? Do not the very champions of the church insist, that the words of these articles are general and indeterminate, and susceptible of different senses? Has not this been lately asserted from the pulpit, in the face of the university of Cambridge, at the solemn time of commencement, in a sermon afterwards printed, and dispersed all over the nation?*

For the rest, I take it for granted, that whoever has no objection to the making this decla-

which his son has deposited in the British Museum; where, when he comes to the articles, he has inserted the following query:—"Would "it not be of service to religion, if all clergymen, instead of subscri- "bing to the thirty-nine articles, were required to subscribe only to "the matters contained in the questions put by the bishop (in the "office for ordaining priests) to every person to be ordained priest?" The author of *The Confessional* may be borne with, for thinking himself highly credited, in falling in unwittingly with an expedient proposed by so excellent a person; and the discovery he hopes may have a good effect, if ever it should come to be the subject of public and serious disquisition, what would, or would not, be of service to religion? as Dr. Clarke's authority, in this instance at least, would silence the prejudices conceived against a writer much inferior to that great man, and so much more obnoxious to the bigots of the day.

* 1757, by Dr. Powell.

ration, *ore tenus*, in public, will have none to the subscribing his name to it: and, if that will satisfy, it is a circumstance which will readily be given up.

There is, indeed, something in this declaration, that amounts to an acknowledgement of the divine authority of the scriptures; and Dr. Hartley, having first reprobated all other subscriptions, hath seen fit to add, "That it seems "needless, or insnaring, to subscribe even to "the scriptures themselves. If to any parti- "cular canon, copy, &c. insnaring, because "of the many real doubts in these things. If "not, it is quite superfluous, from the latitude "allowed."*

* Observations, vol. II. p. 353. The learned Dr. Kennicot hath informed us, in the *Introduction to his second Dissertation* on the state of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, p. 9. that "subscription to an article affirming the integrity of the printed He- "brew text, is still rigidly required from the candidates for holy "orders in some countries." One might have hoped, that his own useful labours would, in no long time, put an end to this absurd practice every where. One might, I say, have hoped this, had he not told us, that "the denial of it has been lately represented, in this "our land of light and liberty, as a crime so replete with public evil, "as to call loudly for public censure." I have had the satisfaction however of hearing from divers quarters, that, for the honour of *this land of light and liberty*, there is but *one* man in it, pretending to be a scholar, who would venture his credit upon so crude a judgment. Be that as it may, the man who is capable of giving this opinion, would have very little scruple in inforcing subscription to it. And indeed why should he have any, if nineteen in twenty of those who condemn his judgment in this matter, have no objection to the subscribing an article affirming, that the Athanasian Creed *may be proved by most certain warrants of scripture?* Why shall I not believe Arias Montanus, who pretended he could demonstrate the integrity of the common Hebrew text, or the man who condemns Dr. Kennicot for denying it; as soon as John Calvin or Daniel

I will freely declare, that I think this is spinning the thread too fine. But, before I proceed to offer my sentiments upon the whole of this passage, let us consider, what may be inferred from so much of it, as may be safely allowed; and that is, that to require subscription to any particular copy or canon of scripture, is insnaring.

That no man, or body of men, have authority to authenticate one copy of the scriptures, rather than another, will, I suppose, appear sufficiently to those who have read and considered what the writers among the reformed have offered concerning the superior respect paid to the Vulgate by the council of Trent. Even the cooler sort of the roman catholic writers themselves have found this so reasonable and evident, that, to save the honour of the council, they have been obliged to hunt for a more commodious sense of the canon, than the plain words import; that is to say, a sense which does not imply, that the fathers of

Waterland, who offer me their warrants for the other propoſition? Will Dr. Kennicot, or any other man ſay, that the one is a greater extravagance than the other? What reaſon will they give for it, but that the one propoſition is eſtabliſhed, and the other is not? And if this is a good reaſon, the foreigners, who inſiſt upon candidates for orders atteſting their belief of the integrity of the printed Hebrew text, are not at all more extravagant than the Waterlands and Calvins of our own country. But indeed it is poſſible the two propoſitions may be more nearly related than we are aware. If I miſtake not, the very man who imputed this high crime to Dr. Kennicot, inſulted old Whiſton for not being able to find evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Teſtament. Who knows what may become of theſe proofs, if they ſhould fall into Dr. Kennicot's hands? Let thoſe who applaud Dr. Kennicot's undertaking, but cannot bear *The Confeſſional*, learn what that meaneth—*Quam temere in noſmet legem ſancimus iniquam?*

Trent intended to authenticate the latin version in preference to any other.*

Hence arises an argument *à fortiori*, against requiring subscription to creeds, articles, or systems, either dogmatical or explanatory, composed and established by human authority. If no body of men have authority to authenticate one copy of the scriptures above another, no body of men have authority to interpret the scriptures, so as to authenticate such interpretation, as a standard for all who receive the scriptures. The encroachment upon christian liberty is the same in both cases. The authority of the council of Trent, in the former case, was disowned on all hands. And concerning the power of christian magistrates at large, Dr. Hartley has truly observed, that "the power which they have from "God to inflict punishment upon such as dis- "obey, and to confine the natural liberty of "acting within certain bounds, for the com- "mon good of their subjects, is of a nature "very foreign to the pretences for confining "opinions by discouragements and punish- "ments."†

I cannot, however, come into this worthy person's sentiments, with respect to the inutility of subscribing to the scriptures with more la-

* Le Clerc, *Sentimens de quelques Theologiens de Hollande ſur l'Hiſtoire Critique du Vieux Teſtament, par* Mr. Simon. Lettre xiv. p. 311, 312, &c. and *Defenſe des ſentimens*, &c. Lettre xiii. p. 327, e. q. ſ. and ſee Phillips the biographer of Pole, in his Appendix, and the anſwer in the Monthly Record of literature, Vol. III. p. 237.

† Obſervations, vol. II. p. 351.

titude, let the subscriber pitch upon (for his own use) what copy or canon you will.

It has been observed over and over, that, notwithstanding the variations of so many MSS. of the New Testament, "there is not one "various reading, chuse it as aukwardly as "you can, by which one article of faith or mo- "ral precept is either perverted or lost;——— "or in which the various reading is of any "consequence to the main of religion; nay, "perhaps, is not wholly synonymous in the "view of common readers, and quite insensi- "ble in any modern version."*

Again, with respect to the canon; those books which have been among the ἀντιλεγομενα, are allowed to be perfectly consistent, in point of doctrine and precept, with those whose authority is more indisputable, by reason of their universal reception; which latter, however, of themselves, contain all things necessary to be believed, or known, in the christian religion. So that, whether you admit or reject the doubtful books, it is the same rule of faith and manners, by which you are guided.

This being admitted, it is surely a sufficient description of the scriptures, to call them *the books of the Old and New Testament, generally received among christians;* and for a public pastor to declare, that he believes the scriptures, and will make the contents of them the rule of his teaching, is a very moderate security, and no more than every christian society

* Bentley's Remarks on a discourse of Free-thinking, 6th. edit. part i. p. 69—72.

with which he is connected may with reason expect.

I have, indeed, met with some gentlemen, sufficiently disgusted with the present forms and objects of our subscriptions, who would propose, that the candidate should deliver in an account of his belief of the scriptures, and of the principal articles of faith he draws from thence, in some form of his own. "The man "himself," say these worthy persons, "best "knows his own conceptions concerning the "authority, as well as the contents of the "scriptures; and, by expressing those concep- "tions in his own language, he will convey "to those whom it may concern, a much "clearer idea of his reverence for those sacred "oracles, and of the weight and authority he "ascribes to them, than can possibly be ga- "thered from his assent to any other form "composed by others: not to mention the "absurdity of obliging men to confess their "own faith in the words of others, who have "no more authority, or any better pretence, "to interpret the scriptures than themselves.

"They," continue these gentlemen, "who "are fond of deriving our rituals, and other "ecclesiastical apparatus, from primitive an- "tiquity, will find, that this was the ancient "method taken to prove the orthodoxy of "christian bishops; and indeed seems to be "much better calculated for the purpose of a "test, than either the present articles, or any "others for which they should be exchanged."

With these gentlemen I so far agree, as to desire that such an experiment might be made

for a limited time, and in the case only of our *elder* divines, who may be supposed to have formed such judgment on these matters, as they are not likely to retract. Many of these take institution to new preferments in an advanced age, and may be supposed to have closed their studies, or, as a certain author has it, *made up their minds*, with respect to all theological opinions, when they offer themselves to the trial.

But, I believe, the certain consequence would be, that they who should be appointed to receive these formularies, perceiving a wide difference in the sentiments of these veterans, many of whom would be found to be men of the soundest learning and brightest capacities, would think it much better, these candidates should be left to the enjoyment of their own opinions in secret, than that they, or the church they belong to, should, by such rescripts under their hands, be exposed to the perverse reflections that might be made upon their respective variations from each other.

Nothing, indeed, could be more insnaring to the younger sort of candidates for the ministry, than this method proposed by these worthy persons above-mentioned. These formularies might be produced against them at some future period, when, in the course of their studies, they had found reason to change their minds. An inconvenience, to which the declaration I have proposed, and which is drawn as above from the ordination-office, is not liable. There the candidate is supposed to be still carrying on the study of the scrip-

tures, "along with such [other] studies, as "help to the [farther] knowledge of the same;" a supposition, which seems to me to be absolutely inconsistent with *any peremptory* assent to the articles, *as agreeable to the word of God*, at his first entrance upon his ministry.

There is another circumstance which recommends these forms of declaration extremely, and that is the modesty with which the answers to the several questions are expressed, agreeable to that state of probation, in which the compilers of the office knew young candidates must remain, at least for some considerable time.

"Are you *persuaded*," says the second question, "that the holy scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for "eternal salvation, through faith in Jesus "Christ?"—The candidate answers, "I am so "*persuaded*." And so he very well may be, without having examined the scriptures with that application and accuracy, which are necessary to form a judgment upon their whole contents. The object of this persuasion lies within a small compass; and the knowledge necessary to produce it, may be obtained with a thousandth part of the pains necessary to persuade an ingenuous mind, that our xxxix articles of religion are in perfect agreement with the word of God.

When we consider the case of candidates for orders in general, it may well be questioned, whether the persuasion above-mentioned is not as far as the majority of them can safely go.

Many of them, in the northern dioceses espe-

cially, come immediately from a grammar-school, where they have thought of nothing but learning latin and greek. At the universities, the point for the first four years, is to qualify themselves for their first degree, which they may take with the utmost honour and credit, without ever having seen the inside of a bible.* And it should seem, by an anecdote in the Life of Dr. Humphrey Prideaux, as if it were determined, that, during that interval, it is better they should not.

That anecdote is as follows: "Dr. Busby "offered to found two catechistical lectures, "with an endowment of 100l. *per annum* each, "for instructing the under-graduates in the "rudiments of the christian religion, provided "all the said under-graduates should be obliged to attend the said lectures, and none of "them be admitted to the degree of Bachelor "of Arts, till after having been examined by "the catechist as to their knowledge in the "doctrines and precepts of the christian religion, and by him approved of.—But this "condition being rejected by both universities, "the benefaction was rejected therewith, and

* "Young men," said Dr. Prideaux, "frequently come to the "university, without any knowledge or tincture of religion at all; "and have little opportunity of improving themselves therein, whilst "under-graduates, because the course of their studies inclines them "to philosophy, and other kinds of learning; and they are usually "admitted to their first degree of Bachelors of Arts, with the same "ignorance, as to all sacred learning, as when first admitted into the "university; and many of them, as soon as they have taken that de-"gree, offering themselves for orders, are too often admitted to be "teachers in the church, when they are only fit to be catechumens "therein." Life of Dr. H. Prideaux, printed for Knapton, 1748; p. 91.

"the church hath ever since suffered for the "want of it?"*

Our universities are generally esteemed to be so far out of the reach of all reprehension, that I should not have ventured to have retailed this little piece of history upon the credit of a less responsible voucher than Dr. Prideaux. But, as the fact stands upon so good authority, I hope I may be indulged in a few reflections upon it, without being accused of outraging these respectable bodies, for which I have the utmost veneration.†

* Prideaux's Life, p. 92. Dr. Busby was not ignorant, with what tincture of religion these youngsters either came to him, or went from him.

† They who will be at the pains to look into the end of the Preface to the second edition of the *Divine Legation*, published in the year 1742, will find enough to frighten any man from ever hinting at any blemishes in our universities. By the sacred fence with which they are there inclosed, one would think every gremial as safe from impugners, as an article of faith is, when it hath once got into an established confession. The prefacer, perhaps, did not then know that they had been attacked by any more considerable person than the addle-headed Dr. Webster; much less that the eminent Dr. Prideaux had proposed, among other necessary regulations in these seats of learning, to have a new college erected in each by the name of DRONE-HALL, for reasons there specified, by no means honourable to the academical bodies. If I mistake not, *two* editions of the *Divine Legation* have since appeared without *that* Preface, which indeed would with a very ill grace have introduced to our notice a book, wherein such freedoms are taken with THE KING'S PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY in one of the universities, and matter of ridicule and contempt raised from circumstances of the office, common to all professors in the same chair. I have seen a list of the compliments paid to the learned and worthy professor in the performance abovementioned, drawn out into one view, for which, according to the opinion of very competent judges, the professor might have made his concurrent a legal return, in a way, however, which would have shewn the little propriety of dedicating a thing, with the title the lawyers gave it, to the Lord Chief Justice of England.

In my humble opinion, the most reasonable account that could be given of the motives of these learned bodies for rejecting a benefaction of this sort, would be, that sufficient care is already taken for the christian instruction of these younger students, without the aid of a supernumerary catechist. If so, both these doctors must have been mistaken, the one in describing the distemper, the other in indicating the method of cure.

The rejection, indeed, is in the narrative put to the account of the condition, perhaps because the catechist, after the candidate had satisfied his examiners in philosophy, might have it in his power to put a negative upon him, for deficiency in christian knowledge, which would look like an hardship; and the rather, as there seems to be an expedient already in the hands of both universities, calculated to answer all the ends of appointing a particular catechist.

For, if I am not misinformed, in both universities, every Master of Arts hath a right to examine every candidate for a bachelor's degree, and a power of putting a negative upon him, and as much for a deficiency in christian knowledge, as for any other default. Upon inquiry, however, I am told, that few if any candidates have their degree postponed on that account. Perhaps some may think it is, because they are seldom or never examined in that branch, for a reason which the universities think very sufficient, and which operates equally to the exclusion of an appointed catechist.

Let us suppose this reason to be the impropriety of intermixing catechistical examinations with those which ascertain the candidate's qualifications for a degree in arts, and of a catechist's interfering in the conferring such degree ; yet might not the condition be modelled by a small alteration, so as to render such a benefaction eligible both to the universities and the public?

Suppose, for example, no academical candidate should be promoted to the office of deacon, without exhibiting to the bishop, among the rest of his papers, a testimonial from the academical catechist of his proficiency in christian knowledge? It does not seem at first sight at all more proper, that the arts which qualify a man for a bachelor's degree should of themselves qualify him for the christian ministry, than that christian knowledge alone should qualify a man for a degree in arts.

But here I shall certainly be told, that this is the affair of the bishops, and not of the universities ; and that it is an unwarrantable reflection upon their lordships to suppose, they should want to be informed by a catechist, of the abilities of a candidate in that branch of knowledge, which is the particular object of their own examinations.

To this I can only answer in the words of Dr. Prideaux above-cited : " Many who have " taken their first degree, ARE TOO OFTEN " ADMITTED to be *teachers* in the church; " when they are only fit to be *catechumens*." Perhaps, matters may have mended since the days of Dr. Prideaux ; or, if not, the whole

fault may not belong to the bishops and their examiners. For if, as the worthy Dean of Norwich hath observed, "bishops are often "deceived by false testimonials," the universities may come in for a share of the blame, since they give as ample testimonials, and often upon as slender grounds (particularly with respect to christian knowledge,) as country ministers.

In the meantime, these considerations, as matters now stand, make it still more necessary, that the church (to save the credit of all parties) should content herself with the declaration, framed from the ordination office, set forth above. This declaration not only admits of improvements in theological learning, but exhibits the candidate as determined to make them; and surely the professing such determination should be no trifling part of the security he gives to the church. And after that, to require the same candidate to subscribe to a system of opinions, or interpretations of scripture, established in perpetuity, and which he may not gainsay at any future period (notwithstanding what he may find in the scripture to the contrary) on the peril of being excommunicated *ipso facto*, is not only absolutely to preclude him from all future improvements, but likewise disabling him from performing his promise to any good purpose, viz. "to be diligent in reading the holy scrip-"tures, and in such studies as help to the "knowledge of the same."

"No," says a late notable casuist, "young "people may give a general assent to the arti-

" cles, on the authority of others; more can-
" not be expected or understood to be done by
" those who are just beginning to exercise
" their reason,—by which means room is left
" for improvements in theology."*

Which, as I take it, implies a supposition that these young subscribers are left at liberty to retract their assent to the articles, if, in the progress of their studies, they find what they assented to inconsistent with their farther discoveries and improvements in theology. And, if this is really the case, why would not the preacher speak out?

This sermon, so far as I know, is the last formal defence of the subscriptions required in the church of England, that hath yet appeared; and is so well calculated to make all ends meet, that it is a thousand pities it should ever be superseded by any new production upon the subject, which should change the posture of defence;† particularly, as (in conjunction with

* See Dr. Powell's Sermon, on Commencement Sunday, 1757.

† Father Baron's maxim, *malum bene positum ne moveto*, should never be out of the eye of him who takes upon him to contend for the perpetuity of particular human forms and systems of religion. The sermon mentioned above had placed and left subscriptions in the most commodious position imaginable, namely, upon the broad bottom of a latitude of which no man could see the extent or limits; a latitude calculated "on purpose to admit within the pale of the church, men "of various, and even opposite principles." There was no fear, that the honesty of any subscriber should, upon this plan, be called in question; for, "the larger its compass is, the more honest men will "it comprehend; and perhaps there is no danger, even in times of "the greatest freedom and candor, that it should become too wide." It would be hard to say what religious principles a man must entertain, who could not, upon this footing, honestly subscribe any confession. Even they, "who are advanced a little farther into life than

two or three other tracts, lately published) it will greatly assist our posterity in forming a

"children," might upon the Doctor's plan safely subscribe the xxxix articles; "for no man would conceive any thing farther to be meant "by their subscriptions, than that they acknowledged themselves "members of the church of England; and declared that they had no "objection to her articles, but a general belief of them, grounded "upon the authority of others; and all this, notwithstanding every "subscriber, acknowledges by his subscription, *willingly* and *ex* "*animo*, all and every the said articles to be agreeable to the word "of God." See Dr. Powell's Commencement Sermon, 1757, p. 13 & 17. and canon xxxvi. Now, every man of common sense sees that nothing can be more ridiculous than to join the idea of a test, to subscriptions allowed in this, or indeed in any latitude, where the subscription required is to a Confession agreed upon *for the avoiding diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion.* And yet, no doubt but this reverend Doctor's expedient has been most thankfully accepted by a great many subscribers, within the last ten years, and the rather, as in all that time the church hath not declared against it.—And now, most unseasonably, steps in the learned Dr. Rutherforth; and he, by reviving the notion that established Confessions, even in protestant churches, "are designed to be tests, by which the governors of the church "may find out, whether they who desire to be appointed pastors and "teachers, assent to the faith and doctrines contained in them, or not," impounds all subscribers, once more, within the ancient pale of church-authority, and confines them to the uniform sense of church governors. Upon Dr. Powell's plan, church-governors can find out nothing by subscriptions, but that the subscribers are, or, for any thing they can find out to the contrary, may be, of different judgments, various principles, and opposite opinions, even with respect to every one of the xxxix articles. To say, that the governors of the church can find out by subscriptions, taken in the latitude allowed by Dr. Powell, that the subscribers assent to the faith and doctrines contained in the established Confession, is to suppose, that the established Confession containeth *various faiths*, and *oppofite doctrines;* a supposition for which Dr. Rutherforth's system leaves no room, for he declares, that "whoever subscribes to the faith and doctrines con-"tained in the established Confession, when he does not assent to "them, frustrates the purpose for which such Confessions were esta-"blished." *Charge*, p. 13. And what the professor means by *assenting to them*, he explains elsewhere, namely, the giving church-

true judgment of the *liberal sentiments* of the present age on the article of *moral honesty*, as

governors ſufficient aſſurance of the ſoundneſs of their faith and doctrines, p. 3. But of *two* or *more oppoſite* doctrines, *one* or *more* muſt be *unſound*; and the mere act of ſubſcribing, where the uniform ſenſe of church governors, with reſpect to the faith and doctrines to be ſubſcribed to, is not firſt eſtabliſhed, will not give church-governors ſufficient, or indeed any aſſurance, which of the oppoſite doctrines the ſubſcriber aſſents to. To do Dr. Powell juſtice, however, his ſcheme has much more of a proteſtant air, than that of the learned profeſſor. The great and leading proteſtant principle is, that the ſcriptures are the *only rule of faith* to every chriſtian, whether he is a clergyman or a layman. But whoever is required to aſſent to human interpretations of ſcripture, as a teſt of the ſoundneſs of his faith, is required to adopt another rule of faith, ſubſtituted in the place of the ſcriptures; and is ſo far required to deſert the only proteſtant rule of faith, or, at the beſt, to abide by it under ſuch reſtrictions as exclude his right of judging for himſelf. But this, Dr. Rutherforth aſſerts, church-governors have a right to require of the clergy; and if it is not required of the laity, it is not, it ſeems, for want of the good-will of the church-governors, for they "underſtand "the laity to be as much bound in conſcience to believe what is con-"tained in theſe human interpretations of ſcripture, as the clergy "who declare their aſſent to them." The profeſſor ſays indeed, that "no church has a right to make uſe of its Confeſſion [i. e. its "interpretations of ſcripture] as a law, to compel the candidates for "holy orders to aſſent to the propoſitions contained in it, but only as "a teſt to diſcover whether they do aſſent to them or not." But what if they do not aſſent to them? Why then the Confeſſion immediately operates as a teſt-law, and excludes them from certain privileges, from which, had the ſcriptures been allowed to be their only rule of faith, they would not have been excluded. And wherein, after all this quibbling, does the learned profeſſor's plan of church-authority differ from that of popery, but in this circumſtance, that *his* proteſtant church-governors *have all the benefits of infallibility, without the abſurdity of pretending to it?* See Dedication to Pope Clement XI. p. iii. ed. 8vo. 1715. But Dr. Powell's ſcheme has indeed, as I ſaid, a little more of a proteſtant aſpect. For though he does not explain himſelf on the right of private judgment, claimed by proteſtants, of interpreting the ſcripture for themſelves, being wholly ſilent on that head, yet he makes as much room for private judgment in interpreting eſtabliſhed Confeſſions as heart can wiſh: and is ſo far from ſuppoſing church-governors to be always in the right, that he

well as give them a just idea of our *improvements in theology*, and how far we go beyond

ſays, "Every ſincere man who makes a public declaration, will conſider it as meaning what it is uſually conceived to mean. I will not add, by thoſe who require this declaration; not [what it is conceived to mean] by the governors of the church, becauſe they cannot properly be ſaid to require that which they have no authority to diſpenſe with, or alter." Obſcurity is one of the eſſentials of caſuiſtry. But, ſo far as I underſtand this paſſage, it imports, "that the declarer may very ſincerely conceive his declaration to mean, what the governors of the church do not conceive it to mean;" and this muſt be as true of an hundred declarers as of one. Sermon, p. 12. Whereas Dr. Rutherforth ſays, that "the church requires evidence of the candidates for the miniſtry, that their faith and doctrines are ſuch, *as it judges to be agreeable to the true religion of Chriſt.*" And again: "The church claims a right to ſecure the teaching of ſuch doctrines to its members, *as it judges, upon the beſt information it can get, to be agreeable to the truth of the goſpel.*" Charge, p. 5. 18. This ſecurity depends upon the evidence above-mentioned. But it is impoſſible the church, or [what is the ſame thing, in the preſent caſe] church-governors ſhould ever have this evidence, if they who declare their aſſent to the Confeſſion, may ſincerely conceive their declaration to mean, what the church or church-governors do not conceive it to mean. It appears then, upon the whole, that it had been Dr. Rutherforth's wiſeſt way to have left ſubſcriptions upon that ample foundation upon which Dr. Powell had placed them. By pinning down ſubſcribers to the judgment of the church or church-governors, as he has done, he hath only given occaſion to obſerve, that popiſh equally with proteſtant churches fall within his *Vindication*; and his feeble endeavours throughout his *Second Vindication* to rid himſelf of that imputation, only ſerve to fix it the faſter upon him. For my part, I ſee only one hope he has left us. The next adventurer in the cauſe may probably do as much for him as he hath done for Dr. Powell, and leave us juſt where we were. In which caſe, I dare ſay, they whom he writes for will approve of his acquieſcence, without withholding the reward of his by-paſt labours. It is indeed ſeriouſly to be lamented, that, after all the lights and advantages that have been vouchſafed to this happy country, and the many deliverances and eſcapes we have had from civil and eccleſiaſtical tyranny, there ſhould ſtill be found among us divines, who would once more ſhackle us in the fetters of church-authority; and particularly, that

the *zeal* and *dexterity* of our forefathers, in accommodating *plain, simple, naked* christiani-

ſuch divines ſhould be found in thoſe ſeats of learning and liberal ſcience, where every poſſible encouragement ought to be given to freedom of enquiry, and the purſuit of truth, unincumbered with the ligatures of ſyſtem, and perfectly ſtript of the vizard of ſcholaſtic ſophiſtry. With what ſpirit can a youth of ingenuous probity of mind purſue his ſcriptural ſtudies, when he reflects, that whatever diſcoveries he may make, upon whatever conviction he may form his religious principles, he hath already given the church ſecurity to be determined by her Confeſſion, upon the authority of others, in terms which could not have been ſtronger or more expreſs, had he done it after the moſt minute examination of its contents? With what alacrity can he go forward in queſt of religious knowledge, in order to qualify himſelf for a faithful miniſter of the goſpel, under anxieties and ſuſpicions that the word of God may diſagree with the eſtabliſhed Confeſſion, to which, however, if he does not ſubſcribe in the ſame poſitive and abſolute terms, he is told, *he muſt apply himſelf to ſome other way of getting a livelihood;* and over and beſides have the mortification to be upbraided as a revolter from the aſſent he had given, though it was merely upon truſt, by a hundred mean, narrow-minded men, who have taken the hint from their own ſubſcriptions, never to think for themſelves? The time was, when the moderation of the church of England gave her ſome advantage over the eſtabliſhed church of Scotland, which at that period was the more rigorous of the two, in adhering to her doctrinal ſyſtem. Were Dr. Rutherforth's Vindication to be the ſtandard of orthodoxy among us, we ſhould ſoon be in a fair way of loſing this advantage. The language of the moſt reſpectable of the clergy of the church of Scotland is become the language of truth, reaſon, peace, and chriſtian liberty; and it is with pleaſure I can now cloſe my additions with a ſpecimen of it, delivered in a public diſcourſe, about three months after Dr. Rutherforth's Charge, and on a ſimilar occaſion.—"The "miniſters of religion," ſays this truly chriſtian preacher, "are "bound to lead the way to union, by keeping at the utmoſt diſtance "from ſpiritual dominion over the faith and conſciences of their bre-"thren. *Neither*, ſays the apoſtle *Peter*, 1 Ep. v. 3. *as being* "*lords over God's heritage, but being enſamples to the flock.* And "his beloved brother Paul to the ſame purpoſe; 2 *Cor.* i. 24. *Not* "*for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your* "*joy: for by faith*, that is, by ſincere, private, perſonal convic-

ty, with the arts, ornaments, opulence, pow-

" tion, *ye ſtand.* After ſuch declarations as theſe from thoſe who " were divinely inſpired, to claim the dominion of people's faith and " conſcience, is highly unreaſonable ; and to comply with it, is both " fooliſh and wicked. It is, in effect, to ſet aſide real infallible au- " thority, and to ſubſtitute that which is weak and fallible in the " room of it. From thence, too, come diviſions, hereſies, ſtrifes ve- " ry calamitous. Our bleſſed Lord foreſaw this, and therefore ex- " preſly enjoined, *Matth.* xxiii. 9. 10. that we ſhould *call no man* " *father upon earth, becauſe one is our father, who is in heaven :* " *neither to be called maſters, becauſe one is our maſter, even Chriſt.* " Jeſus the Son of God, he is Lord of all ; Lord of our con- " ſcience, Lord of our faith ; and now he adminiſters his govern- " ment, by the written rule of his word. This rule is open and " free to all ; even the teachers of it themſelves are not, under a " pretence of interpreting what it contains, to introduce their own " authority, to uſurp maſtery and dominion. No ; they are, in all " humility and diligence, to aſſiſt their brethren, but not to impoſe " their interpretations upon them. The hurt which has been done " to truth and love, by affecting ſpiritual dominion, is ſcarce to be " imagined by thoſe who are ignorant of the hiſtory of the church ; " and thoſe who are in any tolerable meaſure acquainted with that " hiſtory, will need no other argument to fall in with the counſel of " union and peace which I now propoſe. They will rejoice in " the *liberty wherewith* Jeſus Chriſt *has made them free ;* they will " ſtedfaſtly adhere to it in their own practice, and they will publiſh " far and wide, as their influence can reach, that *the ſupreme judge,* " *by which all controverſies of religion are to be determined, and* " *all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of* " *men, and private ſpirits, are to be examined, and in whoſe* " *ſentence we are to reſt, can be no other but the Holy Spirit* " *ſpeaking in the ſcriptures ; that in regard all councils and* " *ſynods, whether general or particular, may err, and many have* " *erred ; therefore they are not to be made a rule of faith or* " *practice, but to be uſed as an help in both.* Thus we ſee the " wiſdom and modeſty of our own church ; and by this, no doubt, " the wiſeſt and beſt of her teachers will ever think it their duty, to " propoſe their own interpretations, and likewiſe to explain all the " other acts, decrees, and rules, which, from the time of adopting " that confeſſional help, have, or may yet proceed from her."*—

* The former part of the above-cited paſſage is taken from chap. I. ſect. x. and the latter part from chap. XXXI. ſect. iv. of the *Confeſſion*

er, and policy, of the kingdoms of this world.

Chriſtian Unity illuſtrated and recommended from the example of the primitive church. A Sermon preached before the ſynod of GLASGOW and AYR; at GLASGOW, October 14th, 1766. By WILLIAM DALRYMPLE, A. M. one of the miniſters of AYR. Printed at Glaſgow, by R. and A. Foulis, p. 16, 17, 18.

of Faith agreed upon by the aſſembly of divines at Weſtminſter, 1647, which (after what Mr. Dalrymple has ſaid above), one would think, is a ſufficient proof, that the Weſtminſter confeſſion muſt be the eſtabliſhed confeſſion of the church of Scotland at this day. It is true the church of Scotland had another confeſſion at the beginning of its reformation, which, I apprehend, is now totally laid aſide; and perhaps this is the only inſtance of a national church's changing its eſtabliſhed confeſſion ſince the reformation; and had the church of Scotland adopted the above-cited paſſages only, in lieu of the original ſyſtem which was ſuperſeded, omitting all the reſt of the confeſſion from which they are taken, ſhe would have been the wiſeſt church in Europe; and ſo, if I conjecture right, thinks the judicious author of this tract, whatever may be his opinion of the helps to be had from councils and confeſſions.

POSTSCRIPT.

I DID not expect that what I mentioned as only probable, would so very soon come to pass; I mean, that "the learned professor "Rutherforth's plan of *Vindication* would be "superseded by some future advocate for sub-"scriptions, and that we should be happily "brought back to Dr. Powell's more enlarged "and expanded hypothesis, under which every "*honest* subscriber might please himself with "whatever interpretation of the articles would "best suit his peculiar notions." But, since I sent the last note to the press, I find this considerable service hath been done for those whose minds *the Confessional* may have disturbed, by the ingenious author of a little piece, intituled, *a Plea for the Subscription of the Clergy to the thirty-nine Articles of Religion*; who hath once more placed subscriptions upon the ample basis of an indefinite latitude. I am not indeed quite satisfied as to the propriety of his title page. It would, in my opinion, have agreed better with the contents, had he called his performance, *a Plea for political Christianity*, as he seems to resolve all the ends and uses of religion partly into the *power*, and partly into the *convenience*, of the civil magis-

trate; so far, if I understand his gloss upon *John* xviii. 36. as to make it a question, whether Christ had any subjects upon earth? And upon this footing, what can be his quarrel with the clerks of St. Ignatius? Surely he does not mistake them for his adversaries. Hath not father Philips told us very lately, that the Smithfield fires were lighted up by the laws of the state, and plainly insinuated that those executions were no more than *such self-defence as was necessary with regard to the tempers and dispositions of those opponents of the establishment* who suffered in them? Was not the plea of the star-chamber the very same, for slitting the noses and cropping the ears of the opponents of those days? And has not every defender, whether of Pole or of Laud, insisted that these were *lawful means of self-defence?* And why lawful, but because they were means established by law? If the lawfulness of the means of self-defence in matters of religion is put upon any other issue, we must go to the written word, and drop the powers of this world. But then, alas! our orator's plea must drop with them; and that were a thousand pities, as it might infer the loss of the fee. It is indeed a little unfortunate for the particular system on the behalf of which our advocate is retained, that he hath not been able to find any other authority for those articles which do *not* concern *the Confession of the true Faith* and *the doctrine of the sacraments*, but of the canonical sort. But let us not be discouraged. Who knows but, notwithstanding what the late lord Chancellor Hardwicke hath said upon

the subject, there may be some dormant statute, or some lurking clause in a statute not quite obsolete, which may be made to establish the canons of 1603? Why not indeed the act of Uniformity, 13 Car. II? A very short and clear syllogism seems to do the business to a nicety. The canons of 1603 are always bound up with our folio common-prayer-book, as well as the *Declaration* at the head of the xxxix articles. *Ergo*, they are *part of the book. Ergo*, they are established by the said act of Uniformity: and let no man be surprized at the novelty of the argument. It was found out about fifteen years ago, that Queen Elizabeth's injunctions of 1559, were in as full force at that time as they were the first hour of their publication. For why, says the learned pleader for them, they are found in bishop Sparrow's collection, along with the xxxix articles, the office of ordination, &c. which are in full force. I do not see why this reasoning should not do for our advocate. Dr. Anthony Ellys was as certainly a bishop, and knew what was right and just, as certainly as Dr. Anthony Sparrow.—The ingenious pleader hath been, I understand, particularly civil to *the Confessional.* He hath enriched his copy of it with his own valuable manuscript-notes, and hath repeatedly dignified it with *kind* and *candid* notice in his printed plea; on which account it gives me concern that I am prevented, for the present, from paying my respects to him in a more particular manner. Indeed, I should hardly know how to set about it, if I were more at leisure. He appears, by turns, on both sides of the *true* question, and by turns, on *nei-*

ther; and it might perhaps be difficult to find him without a loop-hole whereat to escape.

On these considerations, I am inclined to repose myself in an opinion, which it seems is become pretty general, that *the Confessional*, in its present state, is somewhat a better answer to the *plea*, than the *plea* is to *the Confessional*. This must be my excuse for letting this performance pass with the public at its full value, without any farther remarks. But if the learned writer of the *plea* meant no more than a little indulgence of his genius in the province of controversy, he may now have an opportunity of displaying his talent to good purpose, by attempting the relief of Dr. Rutherforth, whom the second letter of his very able and ingenious *Examiner* hath reduced to a very pitiable distress, from which there seems no way to disengage him, but by claiming him from those catholic cantons, where the aforesaid *Examiner* hath obliged him to take shelter,* as a subject of those civil powers, in behalf of whose rights over conscience, this accomplished pleader hath retained himself.

* See *the incomparable letter to the Rev. Dr.* Rutherforth, &c. *occasioned by his* Second Vindication *of the Right of Protestant Churches to require the Clergy to subscribe to an established Confession of Faith and Doctrines.* From the EXAMINER of the *First.* Printed for *Johnson, Davenport,* and *Cadell.*

A CARD.

THE Author of *The Confessional* presents his compliments to the reverend *William Jones*, A. B. late of University College, in Oxford, and rector of Pluckley, in Kent, with his cordial thanks to his reverence for taking so much pains to convince the public that the *principles* and *spirit* of the said author, are *not* the *principles* and *spirit* of the said reverend *William Jones*. It would greatly add to the obligation, if his reverence would please to signify to the public, the *true* reason why a testimony so honourable to the author of *the Confessional*, which hath been so many years upon paper, did not appear in print before. The said author takes this opportunity to express his hopes, that his reverence's old acquaintance at Oxford, will be no less grateful to his reverence for exculpating their common mother from an opprobious reflection of old *John Fox* the martyrologist, thrown out in the following terms: *Fuit aliquando* OXONIA *vestra religionis pa-*

rens, nunc videndum vobis ne degeneret in novercam. Audio enim nuper a vobis Oxoniensibus subscriptum esse obsoleto illi, ac jam dudum exploso, articulo de TRANSUBSTANTIATIONE. Upon the *principles*, and in the *spirit*, of the reverend *William Jones*, it may safely be affirmed, that *John Fox* was an old ignoramus, who knew not the extent of church-authority, or of the powers and privileges of an orthodox university.

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

A SHORT HISTORY

OF THE

CONFESSIONS ESTABLISHED

IN THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,

AT DIFFERENT PERIODS.

FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE AUTHOR'S M. S.
1803.

APPENDIX.

THE original confession of faith and doctrine established in the reformed church of Scotland was drawn up, most probably by the hand of *John Knox*, in the year 1560. I have one of the first printed copies of it, with the following title. *The Confession of the Faythe and doctrine believed and professed by the protestantes of the Realme of Scotlande, exhibited to the estates of the same in parliament, and by their publicke voices authorised as a doctrine grounded on the infallible worde of God.* Matth. 24. And this glad tidings of the kyngdome shall be preached through the whole worlde for a witnes to all nacions, and then shal the end come. *Set furth and authorised according to the Queenes Majesties Injunctions. Prynted at* London, *by* Rouland Hall, *dwelling in* Goldyng lane, *at the sygne of the thre Arrowes.* 1560. And at the end of the book, *from* Edinburghe *the* 17 *of* August, 1560. *These acts and articles were red in the face of the parliament, and ratified by the thre estates.* In the History of Reformation, in the church of

Scotland, ascribed to *John Knox*, the date of the ratification is *July* 17. But *Spotswood* agrees with the postscript above recited.

This Confession consists of twenty-five articles, in the 14th of which it is reckoned among good works, *to repress tyranny ;* and *the obedience to those whom God hath placed in authority*, is in the same article, limited by the condition, *whilst they pass not over the bounds of their office.* These, and some other particulars in this Confession, can hardly be supposed to have been relished by Queen Elizabeth ; yet we see the publisher obtained a license, according to her majesty's injunctions. The truth is, the Queen of England was obliged in point of honour, not to disown the Scottish Confession, notwithstanding what she or her bishops might think of some particulars in it. The parliament in which it was ratified as above, was held in consequence of the treaty of Leith, of which Elizabeth was guarantee, or rather indeed a party. Mary, who was then Queen consort of *France*, would never confirm that pacification, either during the life time of her husband, or after his death, when she returned into Scotland : but treated all the acts of that parliament immediately subsequent to it, as null and void.

On this account, and that it might not be thought defective in the article of parliamentary authority, it was thought necessary to ratify this Confession of Faith by a legal sanction in the first parliament of James VI. 1567. See *Spotswood's History*, p. 214. ed, 1677.

A little before this time " the churches of

" *Geneva*, *Berne*, and *Basil* with other re-
" formed churches of *Germany* and *France*,
" had sent to the whole church of *Scotland*, the
" sum of the Confession of their Faith, desiring
" to know if they agreed in uniformity of
" doctrine, alledging that the church of Scot-
" land was *dissonant* in some articles from
" them. Wherefore the superintendents, with
" a great part of the other most qualified mi-
" nisters, convened in September [1566] in
" St. Andrewes; and reading the said letters,
" made answer, and sent word again, that
" they agreed in all points with those churches,
" and differed in nothing from them. Albeit
" in the keeping of some festival days, our
" church assented not; for only the Sabbath
" day was kept in Scotland." *Knox's Hist.* Page 436.

The sum of the Confession of their Faith sent by these foreign churches into *Scotland* upon that occasion, was most probably taken from the *Helvetic* and *Gallican* Confessions, in which the reformed churches of *France* and *Germany* most generally agreed. What right these foreign churches had to call the church of *Scotland* to account for these supposed *dissonances*, might well have been questioned; but if the church of Scotland thought proper to satisfy them, the ready way had been to send them their Confession, that they might judge for themselves. This the Scotch reformers most certainly did not do. And the reasons why they did not, are pretty obvious. For, 1. The Scottish Confession, wanting at that time, the confirmation of legal authority, might ap-

pear to be liable to alterations; nor perhaps would the Scottish divines themselves chuse to appeal to it in those circumstances. 2. The Confession of the church of Scotland had never appeared in any other than the language of the country, in which it was composed; nor was it translated into latin, as all other Confessions had been, till above fifteen years after this transaction between the foreign and Scottish churches.

But some time after the year 1581, (how soon after does not appear) a nobleman of Scotland, undertook to translate it into latin, of which undertaking he himself gives the following remarkable account in the Preface. "Since, by a certain divine Providence, the "Confession of the Scottish church (first pub- "lished in the year of Christ 1568, and never, "that I know of, communicated to any other "churches in any other language than the "Scottish) fell into my hands; and having "heard it complained of, that the Confession "of the Scottish church was wanting in the "*Harmony* of Confessions," [which, by the way, was first published in the year 1581.] "it "seemed to be worth the while to translate "that Confession into the latin tongue, that "satisfaction might be given to the pious de- "sire of those who wished to see it inserted, "or otherwise connected with other Confes- "sions in the said *Harmony*." *Corpus Confessionum.* p. 6.

Who this noble translator was, I am not informed; but it is strange that he should know of no edition of the Confession of his own

church before the year 1568, and still more strange that this Confession, should fall into his hands only as it were by accident, after the year 1581. The presumption suggested by this account is, either that the copies of this Confession were very scarce, or that very little regard was paid to the Confession itself. Either of these suppositions indeed, implies the other. I have only farther to observe, that the Confession enacted in 1567, was the very same, word for word, which was ratified in 1560. *See* Spotswood, p. 150, and as likewise appears by comparing different copies.

The next public transaction we meet with, relating to the confessions of Scotland, falls in the year 1580: of which archbishop Spotswood gives this account. "The jealousies of the "people were increased by the intercepting "of certain dispensations sent from Rome; "whereby the catholics were permitted to "promise, swear, subscribe, and do what "else should be required of them, so as in "mind they continued firm, and did use their "diligence to advance in secret, the roman "faith. These dispensations being shewed to "the king, he caused his minister, Mr. John "Craig, to form a short confession of faith, "wherein all the corruptions of Rome, as well "in doctrine as outward rites, were particularly abjured, and a clause inserted (because of "these dispensations) by which the subscribers did call God to witness, that in their "minds and hearts they did fully agree to the "said confession, and did not feign or dis-

" semble in any sort. This confession, the " king for an example to others, did publicly " swear and subscribe; the like was done by " the whole council and court." *Hist.* p. 309.

What Spotswood here calls a confession of faith, was no other than a protestation to abide by the protestant religion, "as more particular- " ly is expressed in the confession of their faith, " established and publicly confirmed by sun- " dry acts of parliament," [meaning the confession of 1560,] and a solemn renunciation of all the errors of popery there enumerated. At the end of the english translation of the Harmony of Confessions, this protestation stands at the head of the Confession of Faith, and the whole appears to have been subscribed together, as is signified by the *charge* at the end, which is thus expressed.

" Seeing that we and our household have " subscribed and given this publique confes- " sion of our faith, to the good example of " our subjects ; we command and charge all " commissioners and ministers, to crave the " same confession of their parishioners, and " proceed against the refusers, according to " our laws and order of the church, deliver- " ing their names and lawful process to the " ministers of our house with all haste and di- " ligence, under the pain of forty pound, to " be taken from their stipend, that we with " with the advice of our counsel, may take " order with such proud contemners of God " and our laws. Subscribed with our hand, " [at Holyrudhous, 1581,] the 2d day of *March*, " the 14th year of our reign."

This was doing business to the purpose: the king's reign is here dated from his birth, and, no doubt, a youth of fourteen years of age is a very competent judge of the points decided in this confession. But the historian himself acknowledges that this step was no more than necessary to still the jealousies of the people; and the king's *tender age*, stood bishop Andrews, in good stead when it came to his turn to reply to Bellarmin's reproach, that king James had *confirmed the doctrine of the puritans by his own subscription.* Ad Card. *Bellarm.* Apolog. Responsio. p. 352.

In the year 1584 James, mounted on the shoulders of the Earl of Arran, carried all before him, and procured that "all jurisdictions "and judicatures, spiritual or temporal, not "approved by his highness and the three es-"tates, should be discharged by act of parlia-"ment." This was a death stroke to presbyterian discipline. The system of doctrine, however remained on its former establishment, as appears by Huntley's subscribing the confession of faith, upon his sham conversion. Spotswood, p. 373. which is to be understood of the confession of 1560, with the protestation of 1581 at its head, for there was then no other.

In the year 1592, the presbyterians obtained an act for the restoration of their discipline and church judicatories, which has, by mistake, been called, the *first settlement* of it. But by looking into Spotswood, p. 388, we perceive that this act only declared that the statute of

1584, *should be no ways prejudicial nor derogatory to the privilege that God hath given to the spiritual office-bearer in the church, concerning heads of religion, matters of heresy, excommunication, collation or deprivation of ministers, or any such essential censures, grounded, and having warrant of the word of God.* So that the church was still left to make good her ancient pretensions against the royal authority, as she could. And that matters might still be left open for the operation of the statute of 1584, this act, according to Spotswood, passed *in the most wary terms that could be devised.*

In all this, the Confession of Faith remained the same, and kept its ground unmoved through all these disciplinarian struggles; which I mention because the one has often been confounded with the other.

From this time to the year 1638, nothing material hath fallen in my way relating to the Scottish confession of faith, nor can I find that any occasions were given to bring it into question, there being nothing in it that seems to be inconsistent with episcopacy. And it should seem that the covenanters themselves were of this opinion, by attempting to have it enacted, that matters of discipline were objects of faith, as well as points of doctrine.

But in the year 1638, the Scots in general being highly irritated by the attempts to introduce the *service book, &c.* their leaders in the opposition to these innovations, thought proper to publish the protestation subscribed by king James 1580, which they call, *the*

Confession of Faith, of the kirk of Scotland; annexing thereto a band or covenant, in defence of the protestant religion; and this band or covenant, in their protestations and subsequent altercations with the king and his ministers, they likewise call *the Confession of their Faith*, "inasmuch as it *applies* the particulars "of the Confession or protestation of 1580, to "their present circumstances and occasions."

The Confession of 1560, makes no part of this Confession, any farther than that it is recognised, in distinction from the protestation there exhibited, by the name of, *a former large Confession established by sundry acts of lawful general assemblies, and of parliament.*

It is *this* Confession of Faith which gave the name of *Covenanters* to that party in Scotland who opposed all the king's proceedings tending to establish episcopacy, and the canonical and liturgic discipline received in England; concerning which I shall say no more, than that the king was pushed so hard by the firmness of this body, as to be obliged, sore against his will, to order a general subscription to this very Confession of Faith, or protestation against popery, annexing indeed a band or covenant of another tenor, which the Covenanters looked upon as insidious, and as inferring his absolute authority to introduce what they were taking so much pains to keep out. And it should seem as if they were not mistaken in their apprehensions. For it appears that the Duke of Hamilton could by no means prevail even with the kings friends in the privy council to condemn the protestation which the co-

venanters had published, against the king's band. Whoever desires to see more of these particulars may find them in Rushworth vol. 11. from p. 731, to p. 802, and likewise in bishop Burnet's Memoirs of the Dukes of Hamilton. And when the reader has gone through the latter account, it may not be improper for him to contrast the representation made in those Memoirs, with a reflection of the same historian in another work. "The violence with "which that kingdom [*Scotland*] did almost "unanimously engage against the administra- "tion, may easily convince one, that the "provocation must have been very great to "draw on such an entire and vehement con- "currence against it. Hist. O. T. Fol. Vol. 1. p. 27.

But in a little time, the Scots coming into a perfectly good understanding with the English parliament, desired there might be an uniform system of religion in which the protestants of the three kingdoms might agree; and for that purpose, they sent some of their own ministers to co-operate with the divines who, in consequence of an ordinance of parliament, assembled at *Westminster*, 1643. With respect to the Confession of Faith and doctrine, Mr. *Neal* informs us that, "the *English* divines "would have been content with revising and "explaining the *thirty-nine* articles of the "church of England; but the *Scots* insisted "on a system of their own." History of the puritans 8vo. Vol. III. p. 378.

A strange representation! The Scots had already *a system of their own;* and why should

the *Scots* in particular desire a superfætation of Confessions? The design of insisting upon a distinct Confession, is declared in the title of that composed by the *Westminster* divines; viz. *to be a part of the uniformity of religion between the churches of Christ in the three kingdoms.* The Scots had their objections to the thirty-nine articles of the church of England, and though these articles had, by the dexterity of *Laud*, *Strafford*, and *Bramhall*, been shuffled into the church of Ireland, [*See* Heylin's life of Laud, p. 271–273]yet archbishop Usher would never allow that the *Irish* articles were superseded by the introduction of those of the church of England; not even after the despotic Strafford had threatned to have the Irish articles burnt by the hangman. [See *Heylin*, ibid. and *the Judgment of the late archbishop of* Armagh, &c. *published* by Dr. Bernard, 1657. p. 111. 112.] In these circumstances the Scots could with no decency propose their own system as the common measure of faith and doctrine to the three sister churches, as they could give no substantial reason for any pretensions to such distinction. The only remaining expedient of uniformity, therefore, was to agree upon a fourth Confession which might content them all.

It should seem that from this period the old Confession of the church of Scotland was totally superseded *for some time*, though this is not the last that we shall hear of it.

I must now cite a pretty long passage from Mr. Neal's History of the Puritans, concerning the establishment of the Westminster Con-

fession, wherein he hath not been quite exact, or wherein at least he does not agree with another historian of unquestionable authority.

" Those chapters, says he, which relate to " discipline, as they now stand in the As- " sembly's Confession, were not printed by " order of the house, but re-committed, and " at last laid aside, as the whole thirtieth " chapter, *of church censures, and of the* " *power of the keys. The thirty first chapter,* " *of synods and councils, by whom to be call-* " *ed, and of what force in their decrees and* " *determinations.* A great part of the twenty- " fourth chapter, *of marriage and divorce,* " which they referred to the laws of the land; " and the fourth paragraph of the twentieth " chapter, which determines, *what opinions* " *and parties disturb the peace of the church,* " *and how such disturbers ought to be proceed-* " *ed against by the censures of the church, and* " *punished by the civil magistrate.* These pro- " positions, in which the very life and soul of " presbytery consists, never passed the Eng- " lish parliament, nor had the sanction of a " law in this country. But the whole Con- " fession as it came from the assembly, being " sent into Scotland, was immediately ap- " proved by the general assembly and parlia- " ment of that kingdom, as the established " doctrine and discipline of their kirk; and " thus it hath been published to the world ever " since, though the chapters abovementioned, " relating to *discipline* (as has been observed) " never had the sanction of either house of the " English parliament; nevertheless, as they

" were agreed to by an assembly of English " divines, I have given them a place in the " *Appendix.*"

In Whitelock's Memorials under March 1659, are the following entries. " 2. The Confession of " Faith of the Assembly of divines, agreed un- " to by the house, except the 30. and 31. " chapters, which are touching church cen- " sures and synods."

" 5. An act passed for the public Confession " of Faith."

Hence I conjecture from Whitelock's known attention to parliamentary transactions, that the twenty-fourth chapter, concerning *marriage* and *divorce*, and the fourth clause of the twentieth chapter, were not included in these exceptions. That these points were strenuously debated in parliament is indeed certain. The independents on many occasions expressed their dislike to the *intolerance* of presbytery, and were upon their guard against it. Cromwell in his letter concerning the Scotch ministers, may be supposed to speak the sense of the whole party, where he says, " we look upon " ministers as helpers of, not lords over the " faith of God's people. I appeal to their con " sciences, whether any denying their doc- " trines, and dissenting, shall not incur the " censure of sectary. And what is this but to " deny christians their liberty, and assume the " infallible chair ?" *Whitelock*, p. 458. But it is to be considered that when this act passed for establishing the Assembly's Confession, the *secluded, i. e.* the *anti-independent* members were restored to their seats in parliament, and

could they have made good their party, would probably have established the 30, and 31 chapters as well as the rest.

That the Assembly's Confession received all the authority which the church or state of Scotland could give it in those times of confusion is very probable. But as to its confirmation in the Scotch parliament I am in some doubt. In the year 1643, there was a convention of the estates of Scotland, which continued till the parliament of that kingdom met in November 1646. And I suppose the Westminster Confession might receive its civil sanction from that convention. But that convention was never owned by king Charles I. after Hamilton and his brother left it, which was at the very beginning of it. See Burnet's Memoirs of the Dukes of Hamilton, p. 233, 234. That the Confession of Westminster was ratified in any other parliament, I find not the least reason to believe; and that it was not, is the more probable from the title of a Scotch edition of it now before me, of the year 1660. which speaks only of its being "approved by the assembly of the kirk of Scotland," without the least mention of the parliament. I have only to observe farther that though Mr. Neal says that he has given the chapters relating to *discipline*, (rejected by the English parliament) a place in his Appendix [No. II.] yet, not a syllable of the Westminster Confession is to be found in that Appendix; and No. II. referred to in the history, is wholly taken up with the Directory for public worship. This is meant of the octavo edition, 1736. Whether the edi-

tors of this history in quarto have supplied this omission, I have had no opportunity to inquire.

The Scotch edition of the Westminster Confession above-mentioned was published, as appears by the date, in the year of the restoration, and what is more remarkable, by *Evan Tyler*, printer to the king's most excellent majesty. In this year, episcopacy was restored in Scotland, and it should seem that in proportion as that system prevailed, the transactions of the Westminster assembly must fall into a state of reprobation. How it fared with the Assembly's Confession in the interval between that event, and the year 1682, we shall see presently. But in that year, the original Scottish Confession recovered its honour and dignity, upon the following occasion.

While the duke of York, [afterwards king James II.] governed in Scotland, the Scotch patriots thought it necessary to have a test enacted in parliament for the security of the protestant religion, by way of balance to an act which had passed for the succession of the said duke to the crown, upon the demise of king Charles. The intrigues formed by the duke's party to turn this test to the account of the prerogative, are mentioned by bishop Burnet, together with the opposition made by the patriots, in order to disappoint them. These I shall pass over, as not to my purpose farther than to introduce an account of the event, in the words of bishop Burnet himself.

"The nicest point of all was, what definition "or standard should be made for fixing the "sense of so general a term as the protestant

" religion. Dalrymple [afterwards Lord *Stair*] " proposed the confession of faith agreed on " in the year 1559, [it should be, 1560] and " enacted in parliament in 1567, which was " the only Confession of Faith, that had then " the sanction of a law. That was a book so " worn out of use, that scarce any one in the " whole parliament had ever read it. None " of the bishops had, as appeared afterwards. " For these last thirty years, the only Confes- " sion of Faith that was read in Scotland, was " that which the assembly of divines at West- " minster, anno 1648, had set out, which the " Scottish kirk had set up instead of the old " one; and the bishops had left it in possession, " though the authority that enacted it was " anulled. So here a book was made the mat- " ter of an oath (for they were to swear that " they would adhere to the protestant religion " as it was declared in the Confession of Faith, " enacted in the year 1567,) that contained a " large system of religion, that was not so " much as known to them who enacted it. Yet " the bishops went all into it. Dalrymple, " who had read it, thought there were proposi- " tions in it, which being considered better " of, would make the test be let fall. For in " it the *repressing of tyranny* is reckoned a " duty incumbent on good subjects. And the " Confession being made after the Scots had " deposed the queen regent, and it being rati- " fied in parliament after they had forced their " queen Mary to resign, it was very plain " what they who made and enacted this Con- " fession, meant by the *repressing of tyranny.* " But the duke and his party, set it on so ear-

"nestly, that upon one day's debate the act "passed, though only by a majority of seven "voices. There was some appearance of secu- "rity to the protestant religion by this test. "But the prerogative of the crown, in ecclesi- "astical matters, had been raised so high by "Duke Lauderdale's act, that the obliging all "people to maintain that with the rest of the "prerogative, might have made way for every "thing." *Hist.* O. T. vol. I. p. 516.

This needs no particular remark. The good bishop has said just enough to give us an idea of the respect due to the political establishment of Confessions of Faith. I must however observe, that the Assembly's Confession kept its ground by virtue of *possession*, under the establishment of episcopacy, for above twenty years after the exile of the *Directory*, and the form of *church government* by presbyters.

At the revolution, episcopacy was, in Scotland, once more obliged to give way to presbytery, and with the establishment of the latter, the test of 1682 fell of course, and along with it, the Confession of 1560.

This, however, hath been disputed, and that occasioned my inquiring how the fact really stood, being persuaded from the quotation in Mr. Dalrymple's sermon, that the Assembly's Confession was the established Confession of the church of Scotland at this day. The answer I received from a worthy and respectable gentleman is as follows.

"Chamberlayne, in his present state of Great "Britain, Part I. Book III. p. 355, under the "year 1625, [says] the presbyterians in 1689, "obtained a re-establishment of their church

"government as at first settled in 1592. p. 372. "The person to be ordained, is examined of "his faith, and assent to the doctrine and dis- "cipline of the kirk.—p. 380. he signs the "Confession of Faith, and owns the presbyte- "rian government."

Instead of 1625, I suppose it should be 1725. No account could properly be given under 1625, of what happened in the year 1689. There must likewise be some mistake in the words, *as it was first settled in* 1592. There was no particular settlement of church government made at that time; and bishop Burnet informs us, that in 1689, "If the church of "Scotland had followed the pattern set them "in the year 1638, all the clergy in a parity "were to assume the government of the church; "but those being episcopal, they did not think "it safe to put the power of the church in "such hands." "Therefore it was pretended "that such of the presbyterian ministers as had "been turned out in 1662, ought to be con- "sidered as the only sound part of the church; "and of these there happened to be then three- "score alive; so the government of the church "was lodged with them." *Hist.* O. T. v. 2. p. 64. But nothing is more certain than that the presbyterian government in Scotland was exercised at that period, according to the Westminster model.

"But, adds my esteemed correspondent, as "a farther confirmation that the Confessional "Test is upon the original plan of 1592, and "not upon that of Westminster, Mr. ******, "assures me, that Dr. *********, informed "him that the articles he subscribed were 45,

" or 49, (which Mr. ******, is not now cer-
" tain) whereas the Westminster Confession
" has no more than 33 articles."

It is said above from Chamberlayne, "the
" candidate *signs* the Confession of Faith, and
" owns the presbyterian government." Now there are three forms in the church of Scotland which operate as Tests. The *Confession of Faith, the directory for public worship, and the form of church-government.* Neal, (or his editors, as I have observed above) hath omitted the Confession of Faith, but hath inserted the other two, in the Appendix to the 3d. volume of his history in 8vo. and the reason seems to have been, that the *Directory* is considered as a part of the Confession of Faith; and is consequently *signed* or *subscribed* along with the Confession of Faith properly so called. The presbyterian government is only *owned* or *verbally acknowledged.* This being the case, I think it will appear beyond dispute that what the learned Dr. subscribed was the *Westminster-system.* The Confession consists of 33 articles or chapters, the *Directory* of 16 articles or chapters, in all 49. But the old Confession, consisting of 25 articles, will not fall in with any reckoning which will make either 45 or 49. These circumstances, taken along with Mr. Dalrymple's citations from the Westminster Confession as proofs of the moderation of *his own* church, amount to a full proof that the established Confession of the church of Scotland is at this day the Confession of Faith agreed upon by the divines assembled at Westminster, in 1648, and *no other.*

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